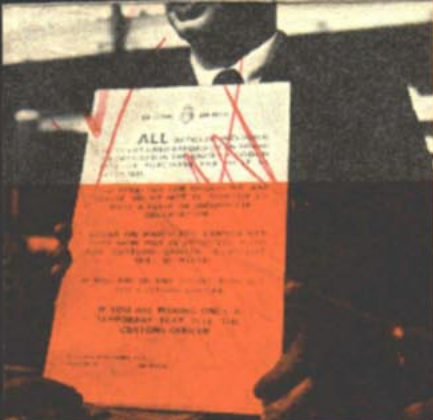




Encounter

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edited by
Melvin J Lasky
& Frank Kermode

August 1966

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England &
Europe
Richard Mayne



WE ARE COMING TO THE END of the era in which pornography had a historical meaning and even a historical function. The free publication of all the old pornographic chestnuts does not necessarily indicate to me moral laxness, or fatigue, or deterioration on the part of society. It suggests rather that pornography has lost its old danger, its old power—negative social sanctions and outlawry being always the most reliable indicators of how much

Pornotopia
Steven Marcus



Fish, rats, men
Konrad
Lorenz



Osborne &
Wesker
J Weightman



Summer
Storm
Cesare Pavese

Tom Wolfe's
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Encounter

AUGUST 1966
VOL. XXVII NO. 2

Edited by FRANK KERMODE and MELVIN J. LASKY

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BUSINESS MANAGER: Derek S. Dyerson. ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: John Hall.

Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1. 4s. a copy (USA & Canada 75c. India Rs. 2.35). Postage: 7d.
Back numbers: 5s. (\$1.00). Annual subscription (inc. postage): 50s: USA & Canada \$8.50: India Rs. 28.
Subscription & Trade department: Rolls House Publishing Co. Ltd. Breems Buildings London EC4 (Holborn 5708).
US & Canadian subscriptions: British Publications Inc. 30 East 60th Street New York NY 10022.
US newsstand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. 485 Fifth Avenue New York 17 (MU 7-2645).
Binders (for six copies) available from 25 Haymarket SW1, 13s. or \$2.00 each. © 1966 by Encounter Ltd.

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VOZNESENSKY : SELECTED POEMS

Translated and Introduced by Herbert Marshall

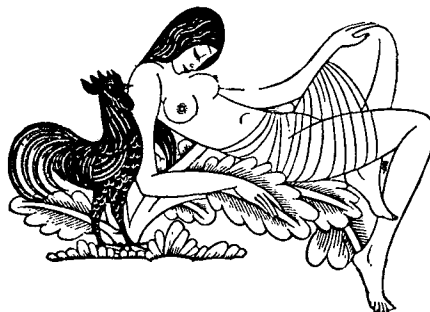
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METHUEN

Richard Mayne

Any More for the Stereotype?

European Letter

"**W**E WERE RIGHT about Britain," said a French fellow-passenger last April, shivering in London Airport's unheated bus. "It's not part of Europe—it's an island in the Atlantic Ocean."

Unseasonable weather, like unseasoned food, is still a stock complaint in continental folklore about Britain. It raises the same kind of dutiful laugh as Parliamentary humour or after-dinner "jokes" about Oxford-*v.*-Cambridge, Scotsmen, or Gay Paree. The slow spread of central more-or-less heating, and the chichi-with-everything cookery boom, have at last begun to dispel the stereotype of the red-faced Englishman in thick green tweeds, silently eating wet boiled cabbage or drinking Brown Windsor soup in a draughty, antlered dining-room warmed on one side by a smoky Victorian fire. But the idea of Britain as an island dies hard; and to many people in Europe it still has more than geographical meaning. Having lived at various places on the continent for the past thirteen years, I sometimes feel this way myself.

It used, of course, to be largely a matter of first impressions. "How long have you been abroad?" This question, from polite but watchful customs officers, was unlike any that one met at Europe's land frontiers: there, the usual query—even to returning residents—was "What have you got to declare?" In England, the assumption seemed to be that going "abroad" was something special, a mild form of escapade after which normality would reassert itself; one was returning to the bosom of one's family, to the castle, to the nest. Friends of other nationalities, seeking to breach these bulwarks, complained of interrogation by immigration

officers: "How long are you staying in this country? What are you coming here *for*?" Elsewhere in Western Europe, such demands were virtually unheard of; but the British authorities seemed to regard the United Kingdom as a promised land second only to the United States. One embittered friend even asked me when some desolate sandbank in the Thames Estuary was going to be converted into a British Ellis Island.

Recently, conditions of arrival in Britain have somewhat improved. It's now made clear—or suggested—that visitors are segregated into British and others for reasons of speed; the forbidding word "aliens," with its overtones of "lunatics" (*aliénés*) and of lesser breeds without the law, has long since gone from the signboards; and despite renewed zeal when the import surcharge was imposed, customs officers generally succeed in making their unpleasant task fairly palatable and swift—especially where they've adopted, as at Gatwick, the supermarket checkout system. I've heard fewer tales lately of grilling by immigration officers; and with new and more generous duty-free concessions, entry into Britain has now become relatively smooth.

Nevertheless, one still has the sense of entering a different world. In some respects, as the "COME TO BRITAIN" advertisements are well aware, the difference is both attractive and lucrative. Not long ago, I visited London with an Italian friend and his wife: she had never been to Britain before. From the air, the London suburbs delighted her—all those cosy red-brick houses, nestling in an expanse of green gardens—a civilised contrast with the semi-urban litter around Rome. In the airport

lounge, she was fascinated by what she thought was a Typical Englishman—a Major Thompson figure in striped shirt and bowler hat, carrying *The Times* and a tightly-rolled umbrella. Shortly afterwards (there was some official function at Buckingham Palace) we drove past a character in full morning dress: “*Guarda! Un ‘gentleman’!*” she exclaimed. When a few minutes later a troop of scarlet-clad cavalry clattered by, I began to be accused of staging an elaborate hoax. Similar amazement greeted other discoveries: the English pubs, with their quaint distinction between “Public Bars” and “Saloon Bars,” neither of which sells coffee or admits minors; the London policemen in their strange tall helmets; the huge red omnibuses with a conductor who doesn’t sit issuing tickets but actually walks round like a waiter; the old-world gunsmiths and bootmakers of St. James’s; the clubs; the *Ladies Only* compartments on the railway; the square-built taxis; the innumerable sweetshops; the early hour when stores and offices close; the evening’s picturesque cries of “Time, gentlemen, please.” For me, it all began to seem like some immense charade, an extension of the British pavilion at an international exhibition: but there’s no denying that this was partly what my companions had come to Britain to see.

TO THE RETURNING ENGLISHMAN, there’s undoubtedly much that’s comforting about such things. I like the feel of heavy English pennies, even when they weigh down my pockets; I like the slowness of British drivers, even when they bumble along several feet from the kerb; I like the soft upholstery of Britain’s second-class train seats, even when they’re none too clean. The climate may be rainy, but it preserves the lawns in London’s magnificent parks, and enables the public to walk on them. The food in many places may still be uninspiring; but where it’s good it’s often excellent, and by continental standards it’s almost always astonishingly cheap. The suburbs, Aunt Sally of so many intellectuals, may have a dearth of decent bookshops and a surplus of cabbagey women’s hats; but they’re quite a sensible solution to the growing problem of giving every family in a fairly well-off, fairly egalitarian society somewhere modest and reasonable to live. Even the holiday supplements in the newspapers, which tend to treat continental motor tours as miniature safaris, show a greater thoroughness and willingness to experiment on the part of British

tourists than is often called for in other countries, where natural barriers are fewer. When I see the family cars creeping down the roads from the French and Belgian Channel ports, crammed with children, top-heavy with baggage, and no doubt bound for Istanbul, I wish I had British number-plates so that I too could get a friendly wave. And when, on British roads, I’m treated with the indulgence due to a visitor, I naturally feel pretty small.

I DON’T THINK, in fact, that it’s merely patriotic nostalgia or chauvinistic timidity that makes me sense in British life a quality that many people from the continent tell me that they sense too: a basic stability and certainty that’s sometimes tame or innocent, but more often upright and kindly. This, I suspect, is less the result of “national character” than of historical circumstance. For centuries, Britain has escaped invasion, war within her borders, violent changes of government, and rule by force. Her political and administrative system was largely unaffected by the centralising impulses of a Napoleon, a Bismarck, or a Cavour. In World War I, her civilian population scarcely came under fire; even in World War II, she wasn’t plunged into the equivocal moral climate of both Occupation and Resistance. Being an island, therefore, has left its marks to this day.

Several of my friends on this side of the Channel—they object to our insouciant habit of calling it “the English Channel”—have remarked on the relative gentleness of the British people they’ve met: one of them wonderingly contrasted it with the lusty violence in the film *Tom Jones*. “The British are so polite and helpful,” I’m flatteringly told; “they’re more patient and tolerant than we are at home.” Personally, I believe they are. On both sides, of course, there are notable exceptions: but although many Londoners, for instance, look pale and tired to an outsider, they don’t for the most part have that air of wariness, of sharp defensiveness or liverish disillusion that one seems to see on so many urban faces elsewhere. Perhaps one reason is that most British people—again with obvious exceptions—seem confident that in the last resort “the authorities” are on their side. In Britain, the term “public servant” is felt to be far from meaningless: there’s a real sense in which we feel that policemen and officials generally are there for our con-

venience, ultimately answerable to us. With respect, I'd suggest that this feeling's less strong in many other countries. Most nations have popular tags to express some form of egotism or defiance, sticking up for oneself. In France, "You have to defend yourself"; in Italy, "You have to be smart"; in Germany, "You have to watch out." In Britain, it's true, one equivalent might be "You've got to look after Number One"; but it's equally usual, in such defensive situations, to hear "You can't do this to me—I know my rights."

Here, however aggrievedly, speaks a deep British concern for law which many continental Europeans recognise and acclaim. To prove that I'm not romancing, let me quote a public resolution passed in Bonn two years ago by Jean Monnet's Action Committee for the United States of Europe, which comprises almost all the non-Communist and non-Gaullist political parties and trade unions of the six Common Market countries. This called among other things for Britain to join the Six; and one of the reasons it gave was that "by her traditional respect for law and democratic institutions, Great Britain would strengthen the very foundations of the Europe we are building."

Sometimes, no doubt, British reverence for the rules is carried to the point of parody: it gives great scope to those who delight in stopping other people committing technical offences that do nobody any harm. If the typical hate-figure in, say, France is a middle-aged woman *conciERGE* having a screeching argument, her equivalent in Britain is probably a man in a peaked cap or apron announcing with stern relish, "Sorry, Sir, we're closed." But every time I meet him (and with his little stock of slogans—"It's off," "You can't leave it here," "I'm not allowed to do it," "Breakfast's finished"—he gets about a good deal), I can't help reflecting that bolshy Sam-Wellerism, like the ways of some American waiters, is a small price to pay for democracy and human equality. And these, I think, are deeply rooted in Britain, despite the old legend of British snobbery and the continued insular tomfoolery about accent and "class."

THERE'S much that's attractive, then, about Britain's conformity with the hoary old stereotype cherished by continental Europeans. But of course it has its drawbacks. At times, coming back to Britain, one feels almost

as if one's stepped into a British film or a mass demonstration of the "British Way and Purpose" which used to be expounded by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. Aren't some of these people, however subtly, somewhat playing a part?

Outside Britain, the phenomenon's familiar. British officials abroad quite often seem far more British and far more official than they are at home. When I lived in Italy, I knew several British journalists whose stock-in-trade was precisely that they looked and sounded like Englishmen in Italian comic movies. This was hardly surprising, since one of them actually played bit parts at Cinecittà. In Hollywood, there was the famous English cricket club; in Rome, Babington's English tea rooms; while both Paris and Brussels boast more-than-Dickensian grocers' shops selling English sausages, muffins, and jars of potted shrimps. In Britain itself, however, this faintly histrionic quality strikes me as new. When did the British begin paying so much attention, adulatory or critical, to the doings of the Royal Family? Was the late Evelyn Waugh the first Englishman to be suspected, rightly or wrongly, of deliberately impersonating a Crusty Old Gentleman? If so, he certainly wasn't the last. At least one well-known character-actor carries into private life the tweeded, *Gad Sir* role he takes on stage and screen; and at international conferences I've heard one or two of my compatriots talk in lordly, imperial tones that were surely designed to provoke their American and continental colleagues—often with some success. And if the needs of the tourist and export trades account for the veddy-veddy British note in some of our shops and advertisements, it can't be these alone that explain all the carriage lamps and horse brasses, deer-stalkers, bowler hats, waistcoats and watch-chains with which some quite young people seem bent on reviving the flavour of the past.

I may, of course, be suffering from a surfeit of Sunday colour supplements, with their lissom, immaculate young men displaying Harris Tweed or English worsted against the background of a Rolls-Royce or the Tower Bridge. I may have read too many articles about charming young British couples who for a mere song and seven years' wrangle with their builders have converted an old terrace house in Blackheath into an automated op-art setting for their rapid realisation that they'll have to move if they want to stay sane. Am I

not forgetting the swinging London scene that *Time* magazine has depicted? Doesn't this belie the picture of Britain as painted by the travel posters? In fact, I don't think it does.

In itself, *Time's* fevered dissertation seemed hardly surprising, and many of the high jinks it recorded were hardly new. What was surprising, on the other hand, was the loud and complex stir it seemed to start in Britain. In the first place, a remarkable number of people, by no means all of them *habitués* of the Luce publications, seemed to be roused to comment. "Who cares?" seemed to me the obvious reaction: but quite a few people, I found, cared quite a lot. Was it a lurking fear, on the part of the once with-it, that *Time* as well as time had switched them off? Perhaps it was, because while some commentators understandably deplored the vulgarity and insignificance of the whole affair, some who took the opposite line, praising the export value of London's plugged-in fashions, sounded a little like cabinet ministers rooting for the Beatles. Others, of course, took the opportunity once more to inveigh against male wearers of shoulder-length hair and other abstruse fashions, claiming that these, like girls in trousers and PVC, were alarmingly blurring the difference between the sexes. This again seemed rather incongruous, because it's just these people who complain whenever that difference is enthusiastically recognised by the young. In the battle of the generations, no doubt, you can't win. But although reactions varied, they seemed to me to have one feature in common—and this was a deep and sometimes perverse form of gratification. Even if the audience of *Time* feature-writers wasn't of our choosing, and the things it applauded weren't always to our taste, at least the spotlight was once more focused on our favourite subject: us.

A FEW YEARS AGO, when Britain first debated what was oddly called "entering Europe," opponents of this move often accused the Common Market of being "inward-looking." What they meant, I think, was a matter of economics as much as of psychology: that most of the Common Market countries had shed or were shedding colonial responsibilities, that their tariffs and trading policies weren't uniformly liberal, and that with some exceptions they gave too little development aid. My own belief, for what it's worth, is that the Six's record in these fields is not very different from

Britain's: but what was interesting was the word that British critics used. On the principle that one reproaches others with just those adjectives that one fears may apply to oneself, "inward-looking" seemed significant. In recent years, in fact, this seems to have become the main psychological defect of Britain's undoubted virtues.

What paper do you read? If it's *The Times*, the *Financial Times*, or perhaps the *Guardian* or *Telegraph*, you'll be offered a fair coverage of overseas news—but nothing to compare, in my experience, with that of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or *Le Monde*. Listen to the Belgian, French, German, Dutch, or Italian news on the radio, and you'll get a pretty broad picture of what's happening in the world: so you will from the admirable European Service of the B.B.C. But then switch on the news from the Home Service—and at once you're back in our right little, tight little island, with major world events recorded very briefly, scarcely a word about the affairs of other European countries, and long delighted stories, complete with interviews and comment, about such domestic matters as the electrification of the Manchester-London railway, the Red Arrow turnstile buses, and further instalments of motorway and "subscriber trunk dialling"—usually without a hint that these startling novelties have counterparts and often forerunners in other parts of Europe. Television, it's true, makes creditable efforts to enlarge our horizons: but these are balanced and perhaps outweighed by the fact that it insulates us at the same time. One of the things that I find disconcerting whenever I come back to Britain is how much of popular journalism as well as ordinary conversation seems to be studied with references to television stars and programmes that mean virtually nothing outside our shores. Two television actors, I'm told, have stood for Parliament, presumably on the strength of their small-screen personalities; and one of them has even been elected. Is it completely fanciful to picture the vast majority of the British population sitting at night in front of its sets to watch yet another stereotype of itself as presented by *Coronation Street* or *Dixon of Dock Green*? To be a placid, taciturn, pipe-smoking, tea-drinking nation is reasonable enough: to sit placidly, silently, smoking one's pipe and drinking tea while watching actors do much the same thing seems to be carrying electronic narcissism to excess.

Nor, of course, is this confined to the mass media. British intellectuals, too, are continually pulling up their own roots—as one of them put it to me—to make sure whether they're growing. In the last few years, half-a-dozen or more books have been published on the so-called "English malaise," all of them by youngish British writers; and the pages of *ENCOUNTER*, notoriously, have been open to numerous articles on the same subject, of which the one you're reading is no more than the latest example. One result of all the squirming self-scrutiny is that people in other countries begin to take us at our word. Another, I suspect, is that by increasing our own self-consciousness it makes our troubles worse.

AT THE ROOT of most of Britain's present difficulties, as we all know, lies the problem of adjusting to her changed situation in the world. Once a great world power, she's now a fair-sized European country. Once the head of a vast empire, she's now *primus inter pares* in an increasingly loose-knit Commonwealth. Once the world's workshop, Britain now faces a brain drain towards transatlantic laboratories. Once its leading banker, she now runs into regular sterling crises. Once the home of literature written in English, she now more and more feels the tug of American models. And so on, and so forth: the story is as familiar as it's sad. From across the Channel, however, many of Britain's friends and neighbours look on with a certain puzzlement: they too have had to adjust to comparatively reduced circumstances—and yet they haven't got stuck as Britain has. "Tell me," asked a German friend of mine recently, genuinely bewildered, "why is it that you British aren't competitive—why don't your goods sell?"

I won't bore you with the whole of my halting answer. Partly, the truth is that Britain sells a great deal already: but that to keep up the style of policy, at home and overseas, to which she feels entitled she'll have to sell even more. Partly, I'm sure, it's that profit margins on some foreign wares are kept unduly high on the continent: article for article, many British consumer items are both good and relatively cheap. But behind all economic arguments there's usually the shadow of psychology; and many people I've spoken to in other countries of Europe have quoted back at me the so-called "English malaise." Britain's export problems, they say, are only one aspect of her

general problem. Sometimes, they draw alarming conclusions, and words like "decadent," "insular," "sluggish," and "backward-looking" are freely used.

In some respects, as I've hinted already, these accusations take colour both from the older continental stereotype of Britain, Land of Tradition, and from the way in which this is exploited by some of our salesmen. Recently, slightly febrile attempts to feature pop music and pop art—various guitar-bashing combos now follow the serious early-morning news and press review in the BBC European Service—have slightly redressed the balance; but how these go down with the gnomes of Zurich and Britain's other rich uncles I don't know. The affair of the import surcharge, imposed unilaterally by Britain against the rules of GATT and EFTA, further strengthened the stereotype. If Britain was going to have to break the law temporarily anyway, my continental friends argued, why cower behind further protection against imports instead of giving exports the boost of subsidy? Why pull up the drawbridge when a sortie is what you need? Well, with the imminent end of the surcharge, and with a payroll tax that will soon be something of an export rebate, perhaps we're now in a more outgoing frame of mind. But we still have some way to go before we can repulse the charge of "insularity."

Every time, in fact, that Britain has seemed to drag her feet over collective action within the Atlantic Alliance, from EDC in 1954 to the MLF ten years later; every time that she's argued with Germany over support costs, as if the defence of the European continent were only marginally her affair; every time that she's missed the bus over the Common Market, or laid down "terms" on which she could join it; every time she's made a gesture to the Soviet Union without bothering about German reactions; every time she threatens a unilateral walkout from ELDO or the Anglo-French *Concord*; every time a manufacturer fails to reply to a letter from the continent; every time an English tourist still appears to think that Foreigners are Deaf—then, sure as fate, and sometimes as unfair, the old charge comes up again. Once again, we're told, Britain looks at things differently from her neighbours: in a world where she depends increasingly on their good-will and their money, she still hankers after going it alone. It's on these occasions that our friends overseas bring out the

new stereotype of the "English malaise"; and quite clearly, our own obsessive self-criticism, however justified, doesn't help.

Nor, I think, does it much help us. One of its weaknesses is to focus attention on a recent and rare phenomenon in our history. In some ways, as I've suggested, "insularity" is responsible for some of the pleasantness of British life: but if it means sticking at home minding one's own cabbage patch—and anxiously peering into the looking-glass the while—this is hardly a characteristic the British have shown in the past. If anything, they were up and

doing, and they left analysis of their folk-ways to foreigners like the Venetian Ambassador. But more than this, continued self-intentness of the kind I've described seems to me self-defeating. It keeps us worrying about ourselves and our blessed British psyche instead of thinking about the real problems that face us in the world. With renewed interest in the Common Market, and new scope for a British initiative in NATO now that France has left it, the time has surely come to stop fretting ourselves about the Dunkirk spirit and whether we still possess it, and to realise that D-Day may be at hand.

Nursery

"The hand which you raise
to strike your own mother
that hand when you die
grows out of your grave"

I drew a picture of green hillocks
with blue and yellow crosses
here and there beside them grew
a black spread-fingered hand

"Why don't we see any hands
in the graveyard by the playground?"

"Because the sextons pick them
and take them to the museum

There every child can see them
the coalblack arms and hands
which found no peace in the grave
for they had struck their mothers"

I drew a picture of men bringing
shouldered like long muskets
black arms with black hands
into a building marked MUSEUM

"But when the hands are picked
do the dead find peace in the grave?"

"No for the guilty hands
keep growing up again"

I drew a picture of green graves
with long hands ripe for picking
and little sprouting hands
and fingers coming like buds

"Why then can a man
whose hand has been chopped off
not grow a new hand?
Why does it only grow from the grave?"

"Because my child the dead lie
where the flowers are growing
that's why the hands grow
like black flowers in the night"

I drew a picture of glass vases
hung with ivy and ribbons
full of black arms and hands
with five and with seven fingers

Always the biggest hands
had long curved fingernails
and the vase stood in the middle
of a table that was laid

Erich Fried

translated by Christopher Middleton

Steven Marcus

Pornotopia

THERE IS a passage in one of Max Weber's great essays on the methodology of the social sciences in which Weber is struggling to define with absolute rigour and clarity his difficult notion of the "ideal type." He is trying to demonstrate that this notion of analytical construct "has no connection at all with *value-judgments*," and that further "it has nothing to do with any type of perfection other than a purely *logical* one." To illustrate the distinction he has in mind, Weber states that "there are ideal types of brothels as well as of religions"; and he goes on to say that there are even "ideal types of those kinds of brothels which are technically 'expedient' from the point of view of police ethics as well as those of which the exact opposite" holds true.

The writer or scholar who undertakes to discuss pornography has in effect made a contract to construct an ideal type of a brothel—and he has in addition contracted to maintain the dis-

tinctions that Weber established. This is not a simple task, as Weber himself was quick to recognise. On the other hand, he states, we must guard ourselves against such "crude misunderstandings . . . as the opinion that cultural significance should be attributed only to *valuable* phenomena. Prostitution is a *cultural* phenomenon just as much as religion, and money." At the same time, and on the other hand (he continues), prostitution, religion and money

are cultural phenomena *only* because and *only* insofar as their existence and the form which they historically assume touch directly or indirectly on our cultural *interests* and arouse our striving for knowledge concerning problems brought into focus by the evaluative ideas which give *significance* to the fragment of reality analysed by those concepts.

Weber's strained and circling syntax attests to the difficulty of keeping these two fields of discourse distinct. Our interests and our values inevitably dictate our choice of subjects—the significance we attribute to any fragment of reality that we subject to analysis has its point of origin and reference in a realm external to the analysis itself. Nevertheless, in the course of analysis we must dissociate ourselves, as much as possible, from those very values that informed our choice of a subject to begin with. This is not altogether possible, in practice if not in logic—although I believe it to be logically impossible as well. Which is to say that in the social sciences, as much as in literary criticism, the problem of judgment remains central, unyielding, and full of impossible demands. That these demands are impossible in no way rules out the necessity that they be fulfilled.

OUR DIFFICULTIES seem to be further compounded if we examine another part of Weber's

ON THE BASIS of his previous scholarly work Professor Steven Marcus was invited by the Institute of Sex Research at Bloomington, Indiana, to help open up the heretofore locked doors to the famous archives which the late Alfred Kinsey had established. "It did not require a dialectician's cunning," he writes, "to make out that Dickens plus Freud might conceivably add up to an interest in writings about sex and sexuality in mid-nineteenth-century England. . . ." His now completed book, *The Other Victorians*, is a study of "Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England." Professor Marcus lectures at Columbia University, is the author of *Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey* (1964), and editor (with Lionel Trilling) of a one-volume edition of Ernest Jones' biography of Freud.

long definition-discussion of this heuristic idea or device. An ideal type, Weber remarks, is not "an average" of anything. It is formed rather by

the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasised viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct.

In substance, he states, "this construct is like *utopia* which has been arrived at by the analytical accentuation of certain elements of reality." And he goes on to add that "in its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a *utopia*."

The writer who tries to take the next step beyond the analysis of specific works of a pornographic character, who extends his discussion in order to reach some synthetic or theoretical conclusions, is compelled to deal with utopia on two fronts. In summing up, sorting, and ordering the material he has already dealt with, he is employing the logical method of the ideal type—by abstraction, accentuation, suppression, emphasis, and re-arrangement, he attains to a hypothetical or utopian conception of the material which earlier he had analytically dispersed. At the same time, however, in the instance of pornography that material itself inclines to take the form of a utopia. The literary genre that pornographic fantasies—particularly when they appear in the shape of pornographic fiction—tend most to resemble is the utopian fantasy. For our present purposes I call this fantasy pornotopia.

WHAT IS pornotopia? Where, in the first place, does it exist? Or where, alternatively, does it take place?

The word "utopia," of course, means "not place," or "not a place," or "no place." More than most utopias, pornography takes the injunction of its etymology literally—it may be said largely to exist at no place, and to take place in nowhere. The isolated castle on an inaccessible mountain top, the secluded country estate, set in the middle of a large park and surrounded by insurmountable walls, the mysterious town house in London or Paris, the carefully furnished and elaborately equipped set of apartments to be found in any city at all, the deserted cove at the seaside, or the solitary cottage atop the cliffs, the inside of a brothel

rented for a day, a week, or a month, or the inside of a hotel room rented for a night—these are all the same place and are identically located. These places may be found in books; they may be read about in libraries or in studies; but their true existence is not the world, or even the world as it exists by special reference in literature. They truly exist behind our eyes, within our heads. To read a work of pornographic fiction is to rehearse the ineffably familiar; to locate that fantasy anywhere apart from the infinite, barren, yet plastic space that exists within our skulls is to deflect it from one of its chief purposes.

A representative nineteenth-century novel begins, "In the town of X—, on a warm summer's day..." By the time we have finished with such a novel we have learned an astonishing number of things about that town and its weather, about its inhabitants, their families, how they go about making their livings, what their opinions may be upon a variety of topics, what they like and dislike, how they were born and how they die, what they leave behind and what they set up in store for the future.

A representative pornographic novel may also begin with the town of X— and a summer's day, but it does not proceed from that point, as the novel does, by elaboration and extension. What typically happens is that after having presented the reader with some dozen concrete details—by way of a down-payment on credibility, one assumes—the novel then leaves this deposit of particularities behind and proceeds by means of abstraction to its real business, which is after all largely irrelevant to considerations of place. In the century of national literatures, pornography produced a body of writing that was truly international in character. It is often impossible to tell whether a pornographic work of fiction is a translation or an original—one need only change the names, or the spelling of the names, of characters in order to conceal such a novel's origin. The *genius loci* of pornography speaks in the *lingua franca* of sex. One need not inquire very far to find sufficient reasons for pornography's indifference to place: in the kind of boundless, featureless freedom that most pornographic fantasies require for their action, such details are regarded as restrictions, limitations, distractions, or encumbrances.

UTOPIAS commonly have some special relation to time, and pornotopia is no exception to this rule. Some utopias are set in a distant past, some

are located in a distant future; almost all seem to be implicitly conceived as taking place at some special juncture in time, where time as we know it and some other kind of time intersect. Although utopias are often furnished with novel means of measuring and counting time—such as new kinds of clocks or calendars—it is sound to say that most of them are outside of time.

So is pornotopia, although the special ways in which it represents its exemption need to be specified. To the question “What time is it in pornotopia?” one is tempted to answer, “It is always bed-time,” for that is in a literal sense true. Sometimes a work of pornography, following the example of the novel, will establish an equivalence between time and the duration of a single lifespan or personal history. In pornography, however, life or existence in time does not begin with birth; it begins with one’s first sexual impulse or experience, and one is said to be born in pornotopia only after one has experienced his first erection or witnessed his first primal scene. Similarly, one is declared dead when, through either age or accident, one becomes impotent—which helps to explain why in pornotopia women are immortal, and why in pornographic novels there are so many old women, witches, and hags, and so few old men. In another sense, time in pornotopia is without duration; when the past is recalled, it is for the single purpose of arousing us in the present. And the effort of pornography in this regard is to achieve in consciousness the condition of the unconscious mind—a condition in which all things exist in a total, simultaneous present. Time, then, in pornotopia is sexual time; and its real unit of measurement is an internal one—the time it takes either for a sexual act to be represented or for an auto-erotic act to be completed. (These last two distinctions depend upon whether one chooses to emphasise the author’s or the reader’s sense of time—in a considerable number of instances the two seem to coincide.)

On a larger scale, time in pornotopia is determined by the time it takes to run out a series of combinations. Given a limited number of variables—that is, persons of both sexes with their corresponding organs and appendages—and a limited number of juxtapositions into which these variables may be placed, time becomes a mathematical function and may be defined as however long it takes to represent or exhaust the predetermined number of units to be combined.

This is why *The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom* represents one kind of perfection in this genre. Pornography’s mad genius, the Marquis de Sade, with psychotic rigidity and precision, and with psychotic logic, wrote his novel along strict arithmetical lines: so many of this and so many of these and those, doing this, that, and those to them in the following order or declension; to be succeeded on the following day, after all have changed hands or places by . . . et cetera, et cetera. Although it is commonly believed that Sade did not finish this novel, since large parts of it exist only in outline, such a conclusion is not acceptable. Having completed his outline, Sade had in effect written his novel—the rest is only filling in. The truth of this suggestion may be demonstrated by a reading of the novel: I can for myself find no essential difference between the filled-in parts and those that exist only in outline. Form and content are perfectly fused in the outline, and the filling-in or writing-out is largely a matter of adornment—a circumstance that both anticipates and points to certain distinctions which have to be made in considering pornography’s relation to literature.

It also serves to suggest that a pornographic novel might be written by a computer. If one feeds in the variables out will come the combinations. I have no doubt that one day this kind of literature will be produced, and I must confess to a sense of relief when I recognise that I will not be around to read it.

SO MUCH for the co-ordinates of space and time. We next may turn to the actual external world as it appears in pornotopia. How, for example, is nature represented? It is represented as follows.

It is usually seen at eye-level. In the middle distance there looms a large irregular shape. On the horizon swell two immense snowy white hillocks; these are capped by great, pink, and as it were prehensile peaks or tips—as if the rosy-fingered dawn itself were playing just behind them. The landscape then undulates gently down to a broad, smooth, swelling plain, its soft rolling curves broken only in the lower centre by a small volcanic crater or omphalos. Further down, the scene narrows and changes in perspective. Off to the right and left jut two smooth snowy ridges. Between them, at their point of juncture is a dark wood—we are now at the middle of our journey. This dark wood

—sometimes it is called a thicket—is triangular in shape. It is also like a cedarn cover, and in its midst is a dark romantic chasm. In this chasm the wonders of nature abound. From its top there depends a large, pink stalactite, which changes shape, size, and colour in accord with the movement of the tides below and within. Within the chasm—which is roughly pear-shaped—there are caverns measureless to man, grottoes, hermit's caves, underground streams—a whole internal and subterranean landscape. The climate is warm but wet. Thunderstorms are frequent in this region, as are tremors and quakings of the earth. The walls of the cavern often heave and contract in rhythmic violence, and when they do the salty streams that run through it double their flow. The whole place is dark yet visible. This is the centre of the earth and the home of man.

The essential imagination of nature in pornotopia, then, is this immense, supine, female form. Sometimes this figure is represented in other positions and from other perspectives; sometimes other orifices are chosen for central emphasis. Whichever way it is regarded, however, this gigantic female shape is the principal external natural object in the world we are describing. Although I have in part composed this catalogue of features with a humorous intention, I should add that every image in it is taken from a work of pornography, and that all of these images are commonplaces—they really are the means through which writers of pornography conceive of the world. As for man in this setting he is really not part of nature. In the first place, he is actually not man. He is an enormous erect penis, to which there happens to be attached a human figure. Second, this organ is not a natural but a supernatural object. It is creator and destroyer, the source of all and the end of all being—it is literally omnipotent, and plays the role in pornotopia that gods and deities play elsewhere. It is the object of worship; and the nature that we have just finished describing exists—as does the universe in certain cosmogonies—for the sole purpose of confirming the existence of its creator. Finally, we should take notice of the gigantic size of these figures. This is not simply another aspect of their god-like characters; it suggests to us as

well in what age of life the imagination of pornography has its grounds.

AS FOR EXTERNAL NATURE as we ordinarily perceive it, that exists in pornotopia in an incidental yet interesting way. If a tree or a bush is represented as existing, the one purpose of its existence is as a place to copulate under or behind. If there is a stream, then the purpose of that stream is as a place in which to bathe before copulating. If a rainstorm comes up, then the purpose of that rainstorm is to drive one indoors in order to copulate.¹ Nature, in other words, has no separate existence in pornotopia; it is not external to us, or “out there.” There is no “out there” in pornography, which serves to indicate to us again in what phase of our mental existence this kind of thinking has its origins.

These attributes of nature in pornotopia are in turn connected with others, which have to do with the richness and inexhaustibility of life in this imaginary world—pornotopia is a pornocopia as well. Pornotopia is literally a world of grace abounding to the chief of sinners. All men in it are always and infinitely potent; all women fecundate with lust and flow inexhaustibly with sap or juice or both. Everyone is always ready for anything, and everyone is infinitely generous with his substance. It is always summertime in pornotopia, and it is a summertime of the emotions as well—no one is ever jealous, possessive, or really angry. All our aggressions are perfectly fused with our sexuality, and the only rage is the rage of lust, a happy fury indeed.

Yet behind these representations of physiological abundance and sexual plenitude one senses an anxiety that points in the opposite direction. Pornotopia could in fact only have been imagined by persons who have suffered extreme deprivation, and I do not by this mean sexual deprivation in the genital sense alone. One gets the distinct impression, after reading a good deal of this literature, that it could only have been written by men who at some point in their lives had been starved. The insatiability depicted in it seems to me to be literal insatiability, and the orgies endlessly represented are the visions of permanently hungry men. The Marquis de Sade once again took the matter to its logical conclusion; when his orgies include the eating of excrement, and then finally move on to murder with the purpose of cannibalism, he was bringing to explicit statement

¹ When D. H. Lawrence dragged in a rainstorm in order to drive his lovers out of doors, he was doing something that no right-minded pornographer would ever dream of.

the direction taken by almost all works of pornography. Inside every pornographer there is an infant screaming for the breast from which he has been torn. Pornography represents an endless and infinitely repeated effort to recapture that breast, and the bliss it offered, as it often represents as well a revenge against the world—and the women in it—in which such cosmic injustice could occur.

RELATIONS between human beings also take on a special appearance in pornotopia. It is in fact something of a misnomer to call these representations “relations between human beings.” They are rather juxtapositions of human bodies, parts of bodies, limbs, and organs; they are depictions of positions and events, diagrammatic schemata for sexual ballets—actually they are more like football plays than dances; they are at any rate as complicated as either.

In addition, the prose of a typical work of pornographic fiction manages to combine extreme fantasy with absolute cliché—as if the fantasy, however wild and excessive it may seem, had been gone through so many times that it had long since become incapable of being anything other than a weary and hopeless repetition of itself. The whole representation takes place, as one pornographic novel puts it, under the order of “regulated passions.” That is to say everything in it—the movements and responses of the imaginary persons—is completely controlled, as things are in auto-erotic fantasies but as they never are in the relations of human beings, and even, one might add, as they never are in the relations of human beings as these are represented in literature. Moreover, the relations between the persons in such passages is intricate and mechanical; the juxtaposition of organs and apertures is convoluted yet precise, and it is often impossible to know the players without a scorecard. In this connection one should also note the characteristic tendency to abolish the distinction between the sexes: clitorises become penises, anuses are common to both sexes, and everyone is everything to everyone else. Yet this everything is confined strictly to the relations of organs, and what is going on has been described as organ grinding.

The relations between persons set forth in such passages as I am referring to are in fact combinations. They are outlines or blueprints,

diagrams of directions or vectors, and they must be read diagrammatically. They are, in other words, sets of abstractions. Although the events and organs they refer to are supposed to be concrete, one quickly observes how little concrete detail, how few real particularities, such passages contain. Persons in them are transformed into literal objects; these objects finally coalesce into one object—oneself. The transactions represented in this writing are often difficult to follow because so little individuation has gone into them. In a world whose organisation is directed by the omnipotence of thought no such discriminations are necessary.

With this relentless circumscription of reality, with its tendency, on the one hand, to exclude from itself everything that is not sexual and, on the other, to include everything into itself by sexualising all of reality, pornography might appear to resemble poetry—at least some power analogous to metaphor appears to be always at work in it. This possibility brings us again to the question of the relation of pornography to literature. The subject is extremely complex, and I do not intend to deal with it systematically. I should like, however, to make a number of elementary distinctions.

Since it is written, printed, and read, and since it largely takes the form of fictional representations of human activities, pornography is of course, in a formal sense, literature. Furthermore, it is impossible to object theoretically to its purposes. There is, on the face of it, nothing illegitimate about a work whose purpose of intention is to arouse its readers sexually. If it is permissible for works of literature to move us to tears, to arouse our passions against injustice, to make us cringe with horror, and to purge us through pity and terror, then it is equally permissible—it lies within the orbit of literature’s functions—for works of literature to excite us sexually. Two major works of literature may be adduced which undertake this project—part of the undertaking being, at least to my mind, a conscious intention on the author’s part to move his readers sexually. *Madame Bovary* and the final section of *Ulysses* seem to me to have been written with such an intention. They also seem to me to have been successful in that intention. I will go one step further and assert that anyone who reads these works and is not sexually moved or aroused by Emma Bovary or Molly Bloom is not responding properly to literature, is not reading with

the fullness and openness and attentiveness that literature demands.

LITERATURE POSSESSES, HOWEVER, a multitude of intentions, but pornography possesses only one. This singleness of intention helps us to understand how it is that, in regard to pornography, the imponderable question of critical judgment has been solved. Given a work of literature whose unmistakable aim is to arouse its reader, and given a reader whose range of sexual responsiveness is not either altogether inhibited or aberrant, then a work of pornography is successful *per se* insofar as we are aroused by it. Keats' hope for literature in general has been ironically fulfilled: pornography proves itself upon our pulses, and elsewhere. Its success is physical, measurable, quantifiable; in it the common pursuit of true judgment comes to a dead halt. On this side, then, pornography falls into the same category as such simpler forms of literary utterance as propaganda and advertising. Its aim is to move us in the direction of action, and no doubt Plato, in *his* utopia, would have banned it along with poetry—which to his way of thinking exerted its influence in a similar way and toward similar ends. There remains an element of truth in this radical judgment:

DESPITE ALL THIS, we know as well that pornography is not literature. There are many ways in which this negative circumstance might be demonstrated. I should like to mention three of them. In the first place, there is the matter of form. The typical pornographic work of fiction has only an excuse for a beginning, but once having begun it goes on and on and on and ends nowhere; it really has no ending, since one of its cardinal principles of existence is repetition. This endless repetition, this repetition without a real termination, indicates to us again that, on at least one of its sides, this kind of fantasy is both a sad and frustrating mode of either experience or expression. Obsessed with the idea of infinite pleasure, it cannot permit the counter-idea of genuine gratification, and of an end to pleasure, to develop. And this absence helps us to understand why it is that pornography is so profoundly and by nature not merely non-literature, but anti-literature and anti-art. One of the few useful literary definitions is that form consists in the arousal in the reader of certain ex-

pectations, the development in tension of those expectations, and then in their fulfilment. However, the idea of fulfilment inevitably carries in its train the ideas of completion, of gratification, of an ending—and the pornographic fantasy resists such notions. The ideal pornographic novel, as everyone knows, would go on forever—it would have no ending. If it has no ending in the sense of completion or gratification, then it can have no form; and it is this confinement to the kind of form which art or literature must by nature take which is noxious to the idea of pornography.

The idea of repetition may hold us for another moment. It should by now be clear that one important attribute of the kind of sexuality celebrated in pornographic writing is expressed in its abstract and quantitative notion of itself. Sexuality in this conception consists of an endless accumulation of experiences. These experiences are both different and the same. The need for variety is itself monotonous, and the mechanical monotonous variety of both compulsive sexuality and pornography is one of their chief common characteristics. If we ask why this should be so, it can be answered that since the grounds of any compulsive repetitive activity are unconscious, and since it is in the nature of the unconscious to be truly unconscious, that is, unknown to us, incapable of being worn away (unlike experiences which are retained in consciousness), and inaccessible to learning, so long as those grounds remain undisturbed so long will the monotonous search for the same variety persist.

But we can go behind this idea, as Freud did, and observe that it is in the nature of instinctual drives to repeat themselves. Instincts are conservative and circular, and exercise their tyranny over us by their recurrence. Their striving for discharge and gratification ends only with the end of the living organism. Yet even as the virtually endless series of repetitions—accumulation of tension, striving for discharge, and gratification—keeps occurring can we not make out that something is *not* being gratified as well? We see this combination of circumstances exemplified most clearly in pornography where along with the report of deep gratification attributed to every experience there simultaneously exists an endlessly continuing search for what cannot be found, for a gratification that does not exist, or whose existence is incompatible with existence.

It was in this borderland between pathology

and biology that Freud conducted his later researches and speculation. He was led to it in part precisely by the phenomenon of the repetition compulsion; and what he found there prompted him to postulate a whole new theory of the instincts, and to propose a set of instincts whose aim lay beyond the pleasure principle. It is my wholly unsubstantiated opinion that we find in pornography a peculiarly rich example of this mixture of incompatible drives. I do not know how else we can fully explain the existence of a literature obsessed with pleasure and yet unpleasurable, whose aim is said to be pleasure, although it is a pleasure from which the idea of gratification is excluded, and whose impulse towards totality is the equivalent of obliteration. It is, I suppose, possible to explain the kind of sexual writings we are discussing strictly according to the pleasure principle, as it undergoes the usual procedures of distortion. I do not think, however, that its distinct unpleasurableness, its violence and aggressiveness, its impulse towards extinction are satisfactorily explained by that principle alone. Something darker seems to be there, something inexorable from which there is no escape and which cannot be understood as pathology alone. Eros builds cities and creates literature; in pornotopia, it may be, he shares sovereignty with his older, darker brother.

THE SECOND WAY in which pornography is adversely related to literature has to do with its relation to language. The prose of a typical pornographic work of fiction may be characterised as consisting largely of dead phrases, clichés, and stereotypical verbal counters. This almost unvarying circumstance leads me to suggest that although a pornographic novel is by necessity a written work it exists less in its language than any other kind of literature. Unlike a poem, it cannot be conceived of as in part a verbal structure, in part a system of relations which have referents in and must be checked against some larger, supervening external reality. Language is for pornography a bothersome necessity; its function is to set going a series of non-verbal images, of fantasies—and if it could dispense with words it would. Which is why, one supposes, that the motion picture film is what the genre was all along waiting for.

Another quality of pornographic prose is revealed in its adjectival insistence. Here is a typical sentence: "The soft voluptuous languor

in her humid optics was far more expressive than words of the amorous storm within that tumultuous bosom." The point about these adjectives is not only that they are interchangeable; they are interchangeable without any loss of meaning. On the one hand, such words function as non-specific abstractions—they can all be filled with the same general content. On the other, to the extent that they become verbally non-referential they too express the tendency of pornography to move ideally away from language. In its own idiosyncratic and distorted way, yet like certain kinds of modern literature, pornography tries to go beneath and behind language; it tries to reach what language cannot directly express but can only point towards, the primary processes of mental energy. This is a partial explanation of why pornography is also the home of the forbidden, tabooed words. These are the stubborn, primitive words of the language; they undergo the least evolution and retain their original force. Their primeval power has much to do with the fact that in our minds these words are minimally verbal, that they are still felt as acts, that they have not been dissociated from the tissue of unconscious impulses in which they took their origin. The very deadness of much of the language of pornography, even its clichés and meaninglessness in a verbal sense, demonstrates to us that its meaning is to be found in some other area. This area is beyond language, although we have only language to show us where it is.

THERE IS A THIRD WAY in which pornography is opposed to literature.

Literature is largely concerned with the relations of human beings among themselves; it represents how persons live with each other, and imagines their feelings and emotions as they change; it investigates their motives and demonstrates that these are often complex, obscure, and ambiguous. It proceeds by elaboration, the principal means of this elaboration being the imagination of situations of conflict between persons or within a single person. All of these interests are antagonistic to pornography. Pornography is not interested in persons but in organs. Emotions are an embarrassment to it, and motives are distractions. In pornotopia conflicts do not exist; and if by chance a conflict does occur it is instantly dispelled by the waving of a magic sexual wand. Sex in pornography is sex without the emotions—and

this we need not discuss any further: D. H. Lawrence has already done the job.²

FINALLY, something should be said about the historical circumstances of pornography. Although the impulses and fantasies with which pornography deals are trans-historical, pornography itself is a historical phenomenon. It has its origins in the 17th century, may be said to come into full meaningful existence in the latter part of the 18th, persists, develops and flourishes through the 19th century, and continues on in our own. To ask what caused such a phenomenon to occur is to ask a stupendous question, since the causes of it seem to be inseparable from those vast social processes which brought about the

² That pornography is almost entirely written by men and for men was demonstrated to me by a reading of one or two of the few works of pornographic fiction known definitely to be written by women. In these stories, there is no focus or concentration upon organs; much more attention is paid to the emotions, and there is a good deal of contemplation, conscious reverie, and self-observation.

I should like to remind the reader once again that pornotopia does not exist and is not anywhere to be found. It is an ideal type, an instrument to be used for comparison and analysis. None of the works that I have discussed—and none that I have ever read—is actually a pornotopia, though several approach that extreme limit. If the theoretical model which I have constructed is an adequate one, then the reader should be helped in making certain discriminations. It should be possible to apply the idea of pornotopia to concrete, existing works, and to determine in what ways and how far such works are or are not pornographic. I do not at all mean that this device can be a substitute for critical judgment, but that it can act as an aid to judgment and as one more instrument of analysis.

A concrete illustration may prove useful. In the last few years, much has been written about *Fanny Hill*. Almost every article about this book that I have read seems to me to have been—with the best will in the world—mistaken and misguided. *Fanny Hill* is of course a pornographic novel; it contains, however (as does every other work of pornography), a number of non-pornographic elements, qualities, or attributes—it may even contain these to a more substantial degree than other or subsequent pornographic works of fiction. One does not, it must be emphasised, need a device like pornotopia to arrive at such a judgment. But the device may nevertheless be used in the analysis of that novel, in the effort of demonstrating just how it goes about achieving its pornographic purposes, how it may at certain points be deflected from such purposes, or how in fact other purposes may be included within its larger or overall design.

modern world. A few matters may, however, be briefly referred to.

The growth of pornography is inseparable from and dependent upon the growth of the novel. Those social forces which acted to contribute to the rise of the novel—and to the growth of its audience—acted analogously in contributing to the development of pornography. Like the novel, pornography is connected with the growth of cities—with an urban society—and with an audience of literate readers rather than listeners or spectators. These considerations are in turn involved with the development of private experience—sociologists call the process “privatisation.” If the novel is both evidence of and a response to the needs created by the possibilities of increased privacy and private experience, then pornography is a mad parody of the same situation. No experience of reading is more private, more solitary in every possible way.

As an urban, capitalist, industrial, and middle-class world was being created, the sexual character of European society underwent significant modifications. The sexual character or roles attributed to both men and women changed; sexual manners and habits altered; indeed the whole style of sexual life was considerably modified. Among the principal tendencies in this process was a steadily increasing pressure to split sexuality off from the rest of life. By a variety of social means which correspond to the psychological processes of isolation, distancing, denial, and even repression, a separate and insulated sphere in which sexuality was to be confined was brought into existence. Yet even as sexuality was isolated, it continued to develop and change—that is to say, human consciousness of sexuality continued to change and to increase. Indeed that isolation was both the pre-condition of and the vehicle through which such a development occurred. The growth of pornography was one of the results of these processes—as, in another context, was the development of modern romantic love. Pornography and the history of pornography allow us to see how, on one of its sides, and under the special conditions of isolation and separation, sexuality came to be thought of in European society from the end of the 17th to the end of the 19th century.

MATTERS CAME to a head during the middle and latter decades of the 19th century. During that period, pornographic writings were produced

and published in unprecedented volume—it became in fact a minor industry. The view of human sexuality as it was represented in the sub-culture of pornography and the view of sexuality held by the official culture were reversals, mirror images, negative analogues of one another.

For every warning against masturbation issued by the official voice of culture, another work of pornography was published; for every cautionary statement against the harmful effects of sexual excess uttered by medical men, pornography represented copulation *in excelsis*, endless orgies, infinite daisy chains of inexhaustibility; for every assertion about the delicacy and frigidity of respectable women made by the official culture, pornography represented legions of maenads, universes of palpitating females; for every effort made by the official culture to minimise the importance of sexuality, pornography cried out—or whispered—that it was the only thing in the world of any importance at all.

It is essential for us to notice the similarities even more than the differences between these two groups of attitudes or cultures. In both the same set of anxieties are at work; in both the same obsessive ideas can be made out; and in both sexuality is conceived of at precisely the same degree of consciousness. It was a situation of unbearable contradiction. And it was at this point that the breaking-through began.

THIS BREAKING-THROUGH was made in three areas. First and most important was the invention or discovery of modern psychology, most centrally of course in the work of Freud. For the first time in human history it became possible to discuss sexuality in a neutral way; for the first time a diction and a set of analytic concepts or instruments were established through which men could achieve sufficient intellectual distance from their own sexual beliefs and behaviour so as to be able to begin to understand them. And it may even be added that for the first time human sexuality achieved a meaning, using the word “meaning” in the sense put to it by philosophy and the social sciences. The work of retrieving human sexuality had begun, but what would be retrieved was in the nature of the case a different thing than what had earlier been set apart.

The second breaking-through took place at about the same time. In the work of the great late 19th-century and early 20th-century *avant-garde* artists, and in particular among the novelists, the entire fabric of modern society came in for attack. The focus of their assault was the sexual life of the bourgeois or middle classes, as those classes and the style of life they conducted had come to be the prevailing social powers. The difficulties, agonies, contradictions, double-dealings, hypocrisies, inequities, guilts, and confusions of the sexual life of the middle classes were for these novelists not only bad in themselves; they were symbolic of general circumstances of injustice, unpleasantness, demoralisation, and malaise which for these artists characterised the world they inhabited. They endorsed a freer sexual life as a good in itself; and they depicted the sexual anguish of modern persons in the sexual hypocrisies and contradictions of modern society not merely for the sake of exposure and sensationalism (although there was that too), but in order to outrage and awaken the society which had imposed upon itself such hideous conditions of servitude. Society being what it is, they were often punished for their efforts, but the work of awakening had been furthered, the work of bringing back into the central discourse of civilisation that sexual life upon which it is built and through which it is perpetuated.

The third breaking-through followed up the other two, and is still happening. I refer to the general liberalisation of sexual life and of social attitudes towards sexuality that is taking place in our time. It seems likely that what we are witnessing today will be as important, momentous, and enduring as that other revolution in sensibility, manners, and attitudes which occurred in England during the latter part of the 18th and first part of the 19th century.

One of the most interesting recent developments in this social drama is that pornography itself is now being openly and legally published. We need not inquire into the motives of those who publish and republish such works—and I feel constrained to add that I would indeed be troubled if I came across my small son studiously conning *Justine*. Nevertheless, this development was inevitable and necessary, and on the whole, so far as we are able to see, benign. It suggests to me, moreover, that we are coming to the end of an era.

WE ARE COMING TO THE END of the era in which pornography had a historical meaning and even a historical function. The free publication of all the old pornographic chestnuts does not necessarily indicate to me moral laxness, or fatigue, or deterioration on the part of society. It suggests rather that pornography has lost its old danger, its old power—negative social sanctions and outlawry being always the most reliable indicators of how much a society is frightened of anything, how deeply it fears its power, how subversive to its settled order it conceives an idea, or work, or act to be. (What will happen to sexuality itself if this goes on long

enough is a matter upon which I hesitate to speculate.)

As I have said, the impulses and fantasies of pornography are trans-historical—they will always be with us, they will always exist. Pornography is, after all, nothing more than a representation of the fantasies of infantile sexual life, as these fantasies are edited and reorganised in the masturbatory day-dreams of adolescence. Every man who grows up must pass through such a phase in his existence, and I can see no reason for supposing that our society, in the history of its own life, should not have to pass through such a phase as well.

Dressing-gown Olympian

I insist on vegetating here
In motheaten grandeur. Haven't I plotted
Like a madman to get here? Well then.

These free days, these side-streets,
Mouldy or shiny, with their octoroon light;
Also, I have grudges, enemies, a religion,
Politics, a new morality—everything!

Kept awake by alcohol and coffee,
Inside her oriental dressing-gown of dust
My soul is always thinking things over, thoroughly.
No wonder my life has grandeur, depth, and crust.

Ah, to desire a certain way of life,
And then to gain it!
What a mockery, what absolute misery,
Dressing-gown hours the tint of alcohol or coffee.

The grandeur, depth, and crust on motheaten Olympus
Are truly abominable. I shudder to be up here
(At the very centre of things) titanic, amazing.

Rosemary Tonks

Summer Storm

THE SUN had not yet reached the bathing-hut on the landing-stage at the foot of the hills. Great trees overshadowed it. The river gleamed smoothly, whitened by the dawn, and on the far bank houses in scattered suburbs began to show lights. Over there it seemed broad daylight already. The old boat-woman, earthy and with dishevelled hair, was going along the line of punts moored to the landing steps, pulling them in, one by one, then bending forward with her left hand on her hip to haul in the slack ropes. Every time a boat wedged itself between those on either side of it, the bump was passed along the whole line, setting them all rocking in the current.

A curtain of sacking hung across the back of the hut and from behind it came sounds of movements and voices. Somebody was getting undressed.

"Look at this silk blouse! Is it yours?" a harsh voice cried. "And these silk stockings?"

The old woman looked up crossly, stopping her work. The reflection from a few pink clouds above the trees shone on the river and cast a glow over her face.

"Here's a skirt, too," the voice went on. "Lovely quality! And another one."

The curtain was pulled aside and a young fellow came out, buttoning the shoulder of his swimming costume. He was short and not very muscular, but sunburnt and curly haired.

"And we meant to be first, this time! Gosh! It's cold, here," he said, slapping his thighs, all pimply with goose-flesh, and

jumping up and down. "We talked about making it a foursome if we could get a couple of girls out of bed this early and take them boating."

"There's a couple of girls ahead of you, all by themselves," the old woman told him, bending to her work again. "Alone and full of beans. Since no one was here to see them they didn't mind waking people up before it was light. They didn't even give me time to comb my hair. Women!"

"Alone!" the young fellow cried as he jumped about. "D'you hear that, Moro? Two girls on their own ahead of us! Come on out of there!" He turned and asked the old woman: "What are they like? What sort are they?"

"Haven't you just seen their clothes?" she answered with a grin. "From a woman's underwear to her skin is no great distance."

"That's nothing to go by. Who are they?"

"They aren't regular customers. One is thin, straw-coloured. The other hadn't much to say but she's already tanned dark brown by the sun, well-built and so full of energy that she almost overturned the boat when she jumped in. Both of them were very stuck-up and stand-offish."

"Have they been gone long?"

"An hour or so."

"Pretty girls? What colour bathing costumes?"

"Ask her if they took their handbags with them, Aurelio," the first voice called sharply from behind the curtain.

"That friend of yours sounds a bright lad," the old woman chuckled with a wink.

Raising her voice she added: "Don't worry. They're the sort to pay for their own boat. They look as if they're worth much more than that."

"Depends who they come across," and the second man emerged from behind the curtain, a tall, bony fellow with great sweaty feet and red hands, fastening his baggy swim-suit over his shoulders as pale as the belly of a fish. He looked straight at the old woman, whose face still twinkled with mischief, and a flash of ill-temper gleamed in his eyes.

She looked him up and down stealthily and remarked: "So we're new here, are we? Never been out in a boat all this year, from what I can see."

Aurelio broke in: "He looks a lot better when he's holding an oar. Then he'd beat all those family men you've tipped into the Po. Any oar! Even a bit of wood!"

"Yet I've never seen him rowing past here. By the look of him, I'd say the poor soul was at his last gasp after three months of sciatica. Glad to get a bit of fresh air again, eh?"

The young man screwed up his mouth and spat on the ground. Without turning round he asked his companion, out of the corner of his mouth, "Got anything?"

Aurelio slipped behind the curtain and brought out a small case that he put into the first punt. Then he jumped aboard and stood with his legs wide apart, rocking the little boat to work it free of the others and creating tumultuous repercussions all along the line.

"It's quite ready," the old woman cried, bringing along an iron-bound pole and a paddle. "I baled out just now, after those other two got me out of bed. All you've got to do is get in," and with a powerful sweep of her arm she swung out the heavy pole.

"Let's hope so," Aurelio replied.

The old woman turned with a grin to Moro, who was standing there doing nothing, and eyed him again, curiously, from head to foot. To Aurelio she said, "Your friend still looks bleary-eyed. Watch out! If you run into a bridge there'll be damages to pay."

"You be careful nobody runs into you," Moro retorted. Clumsily he climbed into the boat, making Aurelio nearly lose his balance. "Hand over that paddle," he said coldly as he turned round, "and cast off."

THE OLD WOMAN did as he told her. Aurelio looked up at the sky. By now the pink clouds had gone. Standing in the stern, Aurelio thrust the pole straight down and forced the boat out with all the power of his wrists from among the others until it swung free as the current caught it. "Good-bye," the old woman muttered, but neither man made any reply and she went back to the bathing-hut.

Aurelio, in his black swim-suit, kept raising and lowering the pole, probing the bottom, bending forward to exert his utmost strength against the pressure of the water. He looked steadily ahead at the smooth, shining stream, screwing up his eyes against the glare. He came out into the sunlight.

Moro was lying in the bottom of the boat, filling it completely, his hairy legs dangling over the sides. He raised his hand to shade his eyes.

"Isn't the sunshine grand, Moro?"

"It's grand to see it from here," Moro muttered under his breath.

"It's the same everywhere," Aurelio replied. "But it won't be so bright for long, this morning. Look at those clouds coming up."

"The worst of it is, when you're inside, all the sun does is heat your cell. It's not just sunshine, it's a blazing furnace."

"Then in winter it keeps you warm."

"In winter you freeze and you can't say a thing. But the maddening part is that in summer, when there's a sun like this, you've got to stick it out in coat and trousers. Take your coat off? No, sir, not on your life! Take off your jacket when they let you out in the exercise yard? You can't. Why not? You just can't."

"It's the same for soldiers, anyway."

"Worse. They shut a man up just so as to make him walk round the dustbins."

Aurelio, bending forward to thrust in

the pole, laughed down into Moro's face. Moro, raising his hand and screwing up his eyes, grinned back at him.

Covering his eyes again, Moro went on: "Once a man's in prison it means he's a bad lot. Nobody wants rotters like us. They tell us we must change our way of life and meantime they keep us shut up like rabbits. If we're to change our way of living they should let us get on with it, turn us loose at once. Instead, no. You've got to stay there two, three, ten years, depending on what your record says; turn yellow, green, grey—that's the only change in life you'll get. D'you know that where I was there was a man serving twenty years? He looked like my grandfather did when he was dead, yet he was only forty. Murder. All because he'd had a drop too much."

"Still, some fools let themselves be caught when they shouldn't," said Aurelio as he bent forward again.

Moro started up to sit facing Aurelio. "But what if justice is worse than we are?" he exclaimed. "Why don't they kill a man straight away if they catch him at it? Or, if he was just picking a pocket, give him a sound thrashing, like men? Then we'd soon see who had the best of it. It's a priest's trick to keep a man shut up for years. Don't you agree?"

"But all they gave you was a year and a half."

"A year's nothing. It's the days that are so long."

"You used to be brighter than that, Moro. You haven't got the prison food out of your system, yet. It's upset your stomach and you look scared stiff."

Moro fumbled in the little attaché-case and brought out a cigarette. The pale little flame in the sunshine showed up the hollows in his drawn cheeks. He tossed the match away.

Aurelio said: "What you should be doing is learning a bit more sense. Be careful where you operate another time. Who ever heard of a stick-up in broad daylight? You're no good at that sort of job, anyway."

"I'm all right in a boat, though," Moro exclaimed, jumping to his feet so suddenly that Aurelio almost overbalanced. "Give me that pole."

Cautiously Aurelio edged over to Moro's side and passed him the pole. Then he sat down and tried to smoke. Moro, his cigarette twisted between his lips, felt for the bottom and made his first thrust, then slowly straightened up.

BIANCA raised her dripping paddle and the punt glided forward under the trees into the still water. "The sunshine's gone," Clara grumbled.

Bianca, clenching her teeth, threw herself down on the bank and looked around. "It's that cloud making the water seem dark," she said. "If the sun comes out again it will be all silvery."

"Is it going to rain?"

"I don't think so, but even if it does, we're here to go swimming."

"You're a real river-girl," Clara murmured, and Bianca looked away, determined not to lose her temper at the lazy mockery in her friend's eyes.

Clara remarked: "Why ever didn't you notice how low the swallows are flying over the Po?"

Bianca swung round to look at the river. Through the little opening where they had come in she could see the current running swiftly past in a belt of sunlight. Out in mid-stream a dredger was floating, moored to a slanting cable and rocking as the water rippled round it. It was quite deserted.

"That's where we can go if it rains. I've never been on board a dredger."

"There isn't a soul about," Clara said. "Once those poor sand-grubbers have gone home—and seeing they spend their life on the water they could at least wash themselves—the river is a desert. Anyone could die—or be born—here and nobody would know. It's like some bygone civilisation." She leaned over the side of the boat and added: "Except for all those sardine tins and broken jars. They strike a different

note. Actually I don't think much of your river."

Clara's supple body in its tight-fitting yellow bathing costume threw back a pale reflection as she leaned over the greenish water. Bianca watched her unwillingly, making no reply. But then she smiled. Clara was gazing at her own face in the water and rubbing the corner of her eye with one finger. "So any mirror's enough to put the fair lady Clara in a better frame of mind," Bianca mocked, conscious that her voice was shaking uncontrollably.

"Taking one mirror with another, I prefer my own. At least in that one I don't see a shoal of little fish shooting out of my mouth, and it doesn't make me look drunk. Nor does it give me a halo from a sunken bowl."

Involuntarily, Bianca's fists clenched, but she controlled herself, stretching out her arms and relaxing her cramped fingers. At ease again, she turned her head, letting her eyes wander over the sky and the trees on the bank. Beyond their trunks stretched a pleasant beach, shining against a mass of cloud. "I didn't promise you the River Amazon," she said good-humouredly, "but that's what we'll get if it rains. Why take shelter, anyway. What can be lovelier than a morning storm?"

"Listen, dear, if you want to have a swim, get on with it. It's going to pour any minute and my costume isn't meant to get wet."

"I want to see you get in."

"Bianca! Is that why you've brought me all up here? For me to jump into that black water and get covered with filthy mud and bitten by crocodiles? Bianca! I have the sort of pretty skin that needs looking after. It's a good thing that sun of yours has been kind and respectful to a poor blonde without much on."

"Stupid," Bianca replied with a shrug. "This life would do you good, make you stronger and more confident."

"But I'm strong already. Too strong and self-reliant. What I need is the opposite. It's cost me one love affair, being so strong."

Bianca bent down to undo her canvas shoes, looking sideways at Clara and listen-

ing as she went on: "It never does to show people you're strong and self-reliant. They're only too ready to knock it out of you."

"Why don't you give up this aimless way of life?" Bianca asked with a smile.

"It isn't as dull as some, you know."

"I see," Bianca murmured softly, feeling in her bag for her bathing-cap.

When she stood ready she turned to Clara, who lay at full length in the bottom of the boat grinning up at her. "So you really aren't coming?" she asked.

"You go, and come back in triumph. I'll give you a cheer."

"Won't you at least swim in here? I'll hold you up."

"My precious, you're too silly for words. One does that sort of thing with men. Off you go, and don't break your neck."

B IANCA shivered as she entered the water, and waded with uncertain steps towards the opening. Then she clenched her teeth and dived. The water was not cold. Over there in mid-stream the dredger was twinkling in the sun. She stood up again with the water up to her waist, and felt the wind cold on her shoulders.

She passed the ripples swirling by the opening and saw the current running strongly ahead. The bottom was deeper now. She glanced over her shoulder at the surface of the water, the low banks, the boat, the vague blur of the trees, then stretched herself in a powerful swimming stroke. Suddenly she was out into the tumbling current. She turned up-stream from the dredger, swimming straight towards the hill now veiled by the sun and clouds and plunging her face into the dark gurgling water, catching her breath as best she could in the pauses between her arm strokes. Her progress across the current threatened to break her rhythm at any moment and she could see nothing but flashing drops of spray. Exhausted by her efforts to breathe she dropped her head for the last time and suddenly saw the water below the surface made transparent by diffused sunlight. She raised her head. The dredger was only a few yards away.

Bianca worked her way around the rocking hull, looking for somewhere to hold on. A shadow ran across the water. The last of the sunshine had gone. The chill wind blew stronger.

Bianca pulled herself up, scraping her knee on the vessel's side. The metal superstructure with its pulleys and sand-encrusted gratings took up most of the space, leaving only a narrow ledge all round. Unsteadily she made her way along it and came to a hut of rough boards tucked in among the machinery. It had an earthy floor and a pile of folded sacks in one corner. In the middle, the deck was cut away, leaving an empty space of bubbling black water—the river itself. A chain of buckets hung down into it from an opening dimly visible in the roof high above.

Bianca went outside again to watch the current rushing out from below the hull, and her eyes opened wide in amazement at the flood pouring down towards the weir, broken by stones and torn branches. She reflected that only an hour earlier they had been punting on the river, and she remembered Clara.

She ran to the side of the dredger and looked for the break in the woods where they had landed. At first she saw nothing but the low, green bank, distant and motionless under the swaying trees. Then, behind a spit of land, she caught sight of Clara's yellow costume. She was standing waving the paddle, shouting shrilly and pointing at the sky.

"There's shelter here," Bianca yelled. "It's safe enough."

Apparently Clara heard, for she waved her hand and disappeared behind the little promontory. The first thunder rumbled in the distance. Nervously, Bianca whipped off her rubber cap. Terrifying clouds were piling up, a sudden bright flash of lightning darted across the sky. Bianca pressed her hands on the hull and stared down at the water swirling and foaming below her. The thunder did not come for a moment and she started shouting: "Clara, it's..."

There came a low roar that gradually

grew louder, echoing among the hills and swelling like the noise of a landslide until it crashed in the distance and died away with a dull reverberation. Bianca flushed as her fears left her. It was raining in the city, for certain. Down there in the valley the sky looked terrible.

"Clara, it's all right here. I'm coming to fetch you." Cold wind-squalls blowing up the river whistled round the dredger, making it swing on its mooring. "Where on earth has she got to, the silly girl!" Bianca muttered to herself, peering at the low bank and the tall trees swaying wildly against the clear streak of the horizon.

Then she saw the boat coming out of the opening with Clara in it, frenziedly straining with the paddle and raising great splashes of foam. But once out in the current she lost course, seized by the whirlpools and blown by the gusts of wind.

"Careful!" Bianca yelled. "You'll end up over the weir!" and she ran along the hull, watching the boat being swept inexorably downstream. Then Clara stood up. (The thought flashed into Bianca's mind that she looked just like a canary.) She seized the heavy, iron-bound pole and leaned forward to thrust it in over the stern. The punt swung further downstream. Clara was gripping the pole with all her might, holding it upright and trying to find the bottom. There was no bottom, and every time she tried to probe for it the current drove the punt hard against the pole, wrenching her wrists painfully. "Idiot!" Bianca howled, almost beside herself. "Go sideways! Put the pole down. Use the paddle!"

She was frantically pulling on her cap again when she heard a scream. Clara had disappeared. She had fallen into the water behind the punt. A patch of wild splashing in the wake of the boat showed where she was struggling.

Bianca dived in, at the same moment almost blinded by a lightning flash. Only in the water could she feel safe. She swam desperately, head down, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, not even the thunder clap. For the moment she was not thinking of

Clara. She was straining every nerve to reach the punt and salvage the pole. Then she could save Clara.

HER ARM BUMPED against the pole. Looking round, through the spray, she could see something yellow splashing about some distance away; in the other direction, in the grip of the current, she saw the empty punt. "Without the boat I'll never manage to pull her out" flashed through her mind, and pushing the pole ahead of her she made for the punt. She reached it and threw in the pole. Heaving herself over the side, out of the rushing water, almost tore her shoulders apart, but at last she rolled in, bruised all over, and seized the paddle. When she turned round there was no longer any sign of Clara. Only then did she notice it was raining in torrents, great blasts that cut furrows in the surface of the river. Clouds of fine spray like smoke billowed everywhere and her back began to tingle, stung by the violence of the downpour.

Clara was no longer there. Bianca tossed her head to free herself from the matted hair that was blinding her. She had lost her cap, and had to run her fingers through her hair before she could push it away. A wild yell burst from her: "Clara!"

All around her the water boiled, its surface unbroken. Steering the boat with the paddle and holding it steady against the current she peered into the swirling flood, trying to find the place where Clara had disappeared. Millions of tiny bubbles spread a layer of pale foam between the water and the air. Through the raindrops Bianca looked for the banks, but everything had vanished. All she could see was a vague outline. She was alone on the river.

Plying the paddle frenziedly she made some headway against the current, satisfied to stay afloat, heedless of her direction. Then, through the hair still hanging over her eyes, she noticed she was level with a certain tall tree growing on the bank. Her teeth chattering with excitement, she jumped to her feet in the drenching rain and put down the paddle. "She called me

'a river girl,'" she murmured breathlessly and plunged in, hurting her foot badly.

Under the surface she found a great calm. The dense mass of water deadened every sound, made every effort seem remote and pointless. She strained her eyes in the darkness and groped about with her hands, but she saw nothing and felt nothing except the weight of the water. When she surfaced she was surprised by the light and the rain. She had quite forgotten them. The punt was not far away. She turned and dived again, probing about until her ears were buzzing and her arm-strokes grew weak. She surfaced again and swam to the boat, clinging to it with her whole body and tearing her costume as she clambered in.

Ankle-deep in water, she picked up the paddle again and looked around her, uncertain what to do. Then her heart leapt. There in the mist was another boat with two men in it, creeping along the opposite bank and making straight for the dredger.

Bianca jumped to her feet and started shouting, waving the paddle. The warm rain splashed into her mouth. The men did not turn. "Over here!" she yelled, loud enough to split her throat. She almost added: "Help!", but refrained. Her bag was floating in the bottom of the punt. She pulled out a towel and waved it, still shouting.

The men were now level with the dredger and paddled round, looking up at it. As Bianca watched, one of them jumped aboard it and the other, bending forward in the rain, handed up a rope. She glanced at the foaming current as it swept past, loaded with mud, then, clenching her teeth, she turned the boat towards the dredger and paddled furiously.

OUT OF THE RAIN her half-drowned head came level with the hull. "Oh!" Aurelio was saying as he threw himself down on the sacks, "Look at the state we're in!" Moro, standing naked at the back of the hut, wringing out his swimming suit, did not turn.

"Here's a woman!" Aurelio exclaimed.

She clutched the rail with both hands and the little boat slid from under her feet. "A girl's been drowned," she cried shrilly. "Come and help me."

Aurelio ran forward to give her a hand. "If you don't come aboard, you'll be drowned, too," he cried. "Moro, come and help!"

The girl, her hand in Aurelio's, looked back and forth from him to the river. She was steaming like a horse; her sunburned skin looked sodden and lifeless; her arms and legs were covered with scratches.

"A friend of mine's been drowned," she cried. "I've got to find her. I've been calling for ages."

"Even the fishes would drown on a day like this," said Moro in the darkness of the hut, holding his suit to screen his hairy stomach.

"Jump in! Jump in!", Aurelio urged again. "You're over the worst. If it was all that time ago, she's dead by now. Where did it happen?"

"Down there," the girl sobbed, pointing to the current and trying to release her other hand. "Over there."

"She went under?"

"D'you expect people to drown in the air?" Moro sneered in the background.

"Jump in," said Aurelio. "Too much water is bad for anyone. There's a hut here. Your boat's waterlogged already."

Moro came forward with his costume draped around him. "Where does she say it happened?" he asked.

"Over there. Just beyond the Sangone." She turned her eyes in that direction and the drops fell from her matted hair like a flood of tears.

"Come on into shelter," Aurelio persisted, pulling her by the arm. "If that's where she went down, the current won't carry her beyond the weir. We know where to find her. Was she the same age as you?"

"Could she swim?" Moro added.

"Can you swim yourself?" the girl asked sharply.

Moro flung himself down on a seat at the edge of the hut, his costume between his

thighs. Aurelio was still bending over the side trying to pull the girl in, and Moro kicked him on the ankle. "Don't you see?" he said out of the corner of his mouth. "These are the girls from the landing stage. My dear bathing beauty," he went on, "we can swim a lot better than people like you who come here to act the fool when other folk are working, but we swim in water, not in rain. We'll see about that later, if you like. But for the present, we'll let it rain. Leave her to get out of it by herself."

Aurelio, uncertain what to do, relaxed his hold and went back into the hut, the water dripping from him. Slowly the boat drifted backwards. The girl stood there for a moment, raising her shoulder to rub her cheek. Then she leaned forward, picked up the paddle and brought the punt alongside the dredger again.

Without a word she pulled herself up on the hull, holding the boat's mooring chain between her teeth. Then she turned her back and crouched forward to thread the chain through a ring in the hull. As she did so, she found that her black costume was split all down the left side and torn at the hem on her thigh. Her white flesh gleamed through the holes, very different from the bronzed skin of her legs and shoulders.

Having secured the chain, she leaned forward to take her bag from the boat. Aurelio's eyes followed the play of her pale skin under her torn costume. Without looking at him, the girl staggered to her feet—she was short and dark, like him—and put down her sodden bag inside the hut. Then she sat down under shelter, apart from the other two, her knees against her chest. She rested her elbows on them and took her cheeks in her hands, sitting very still and staring at the rain.

The whole dredger was quivering and rocking as the current washed past it. Down from the opening in the roof of the hut where the pulley-chains ran came cold blasts that cut into their backs. Aurelio, crouching on his sacks, looked at Moro's long, bare spine and the girl's shoulders, shining against the background of the rain.

"Moro," he said suddenly, breaking the silence, "cover up your seat, or you'll catch a chill from this draught."

Moro grinned across at him. "It's not proper to put on one's trousers in the presence of a young lady."

"D'you think you're so handsome? Young ladies don't look."

"They're too well brought up to say anything."

Aurelio stuffed one hand into the little case lying on the sacks. "D'you want a cigarette?"

"If they're not drenched, too."

Aurelio stood up and held out the packet to Moro, taking one out with his lips at the same time. Then he turned to the girl and offered her one. "Let's have a smoke on it," he said. She made no response but still sat motionless, staring at the rain.

"Thanks very much, but I don't smoke," he prompted her as he went back to the sacks and struck a match.

"**Y**OU SEE what women are like," Moro told him, trying in vain to strike a match in his turn. "The whole world at their beck and call. Acting so foolhardy and running into danger when they haven't any idea what the Po can be like. When a man reasons with them they spit at his feet and ask him if he can swim. Somebody who can really swim doesn't let anyone drown. What'll you bet, Aurelio, that the other girl couldn't swim, either?"

Irritably, Aurelio threw away his cigarette and wandered restlessly round the hut, trying out the chain that held the buckets. He thrust his hand inside his costume to rub his shivering chest and finally came to sit beside the girl at the front of the hut. Moro was watching her out of the corner of his eye. Like her, Aurelio pulled his knees against his chest and rested his cheeks on his hands. "Pretty girls don't cry," he told her with a wink.

She flushed, jumped to her feet and turned to go inside, but Aurelio held her by the arm and tried to pull her back. Then he let her go. "All right, all right," he said.

"We know each other. At least I know your friend was a blonde."

The girl stared at him a moment with blazing eyes. "I told you myself," she muttered as she ran inside. Then she swung round in the gloom and asked him: "How did you manage to find out that?"

"I'll tell you, if you tell me your name," Aurelio smiled as he rose to his feet.

"It's Piccone," she answered quickly. "Well?"

Moro burst out laughing and slapped his thigh.

"Your own name," Aurelio persisted, still smiling. "What does your surname matter to me?"

She stood still a moment, disconcerted. Then her whole face flamed red and distorted, as if he had struck her across the mouth.

Suddenly an oath burst from Moro. He had jumped up hurriedly and his costume had fallen overboard. Dropping to his knees he stretched his arm down but failed to reach it. Then, naked as he was, he leapt into the girl's boat with a great splash and fished it out, dripping wet. He climbed up again, still uncovered. "Blast! It was practically dry," he exclaimed as he threw it down in a corner and stalked into the hut.

The girl watched him come, her eyes fixed on his face. Without glancing aside, he said, from the corner of his mouth: "Those boats are full of water. Go and bale them out, Aurelio." The girl backed away.

"Where have we seen the blonde, Miss Piccone?" Moro sneered, his face close to hers. "The dead float, you fool! They can swim much better than you or me. D'you know where that blonde is now?" Moro's voice sank to a chilling whisper. The girl could see his teeth. "She's here behind you, in this patch of water. Her eyes are open and her nails all broken. She's calling you, raising her hand. She's going to grab you!"

Terrified, the girl crouched down on the sacks. Moro laughed over her shoulders. "Silly fool," he said, gripping her sides with his hands.

Aurelio took him by the shoulder. "You can't do things like that, you great lout. You're only frightening her. D'you think you're still in prison? I was the one who helped her. It's my affair."

THE GIRL STRUGGLED to her knees. Moro thrust her down again with his fist on her neck and his knee in the small of her back. Suddenly he turned his tense, fleshless face to Aurelio and said with a grin, "Go and bale out those punts, I tell you. This Piccone girl has seen me; she's fallen for me; she wants me."

"You shouldn't have got stripped. It isn't fair."

"Sure," Moro retorted, swaying as the girl struggled beneath him. "I don't want any of your nonsense. Go and bale out the punts. They're sinking."

The girl collapsed on the sacks so suddenly that Moro almost fell on top of her. Her limp body in its torn black costume lay white and slack.

"You've killed her!" Aurelio cried.

"They're like cats. They squeal if you only hold them under water."

Out in the rain again, Aurelio stared at the current instead of seeing to the boats, watching it foaming, yellow with mud, under the water streaming from the sky. Eddies formed, swirled away and formed again round the dredger as it swung and rolled in the fierce grip of the flood, all its metal parts clanking noisily. Now and then a broken oar flashed past, glimpsed for an instant before it rolled under again. Over in the valley; everything looked vague and indistinct; the masses of trees on the deserted banks seemed in a different world. One could guess how the water must be roaring and foaming over the rapids by the weir.

Both punts were full. The one the girl had brought was half-submerged. Aurelio glanced sideways at the dripping entrance to the hut, then threw himself forward and picked up a short end of wood floating in the boat. Blinded by the rain, he leaned out from the hull and made a few aimless movements with it. Then he drew back again as

heavy breathing and a long, low groan reached him from the hut, and the sound of material being ripped. He looked round quickly and glimpsed in the gloom a pale, shapeless mass of struggling bodies.

He sat down again on the hull, stretching out his brown legs in the rain and staring at the punt as it rocked gently. The water inside it was clear, compared with the river, and the varnished bottom planking shone through. The iron-bound pole was still there. The paddle had been washed away.

He heard Moro cursing, but would not turn round. He heard sounds of a struggle and a long moan. Then, silence, except for the rain.

Aurelio unbuttoned his swim-suit at the shoulder and rolled it down to his waist. He examined his chest as he breathed in and out. The cold air tasted of mud and leaves. Then he tried to purse his lips and whistle a tune, but no sound came out.

"Aurelio! Quick!" Moro's hoarse voice broke the silence. "Here's another one dead!"

AURELIO sprang up. Moro was sitting at the back of the hut, clutching his knees against his chest. Aurelio barely had time to glimpse the girl lying at full length before she leapt to her feet, deathly white in spite of great black bruises, her costume in tatters. She fled across the dark space, pushed Aurelio aside and fell into the water.

Aurelio had knocked his knee against the planks but he recovered his balance and turned round as a roar of laughter from Moro made his ears ring.

"She's done it on you! See! That's women for you!"

The girl was already some way off, swimming spasmodically with great splashes, half out of the water. Aurelio jumped into the boat which almost capsized. It took him a moment or two to cast off.

"It's no good," Moro said, coming up beside him. "I told you to bale out. You won't do it now in the time. You've let her get away."

Aurelio would have thrown himself into

the water in a frenzy, but Moro held him back. "She won't get far. A woman's worn out when I've finished with her. Watch!"

The girl was rolling helplessly in the current, incapable of guiding herself, and ending up in midstream, splashing feebly and drifting rapidly towards the weir. "So she can't swim," said Moro. "Still, I gave her a good lesson."

"She's drowning," Aurelio cried, "and I..."

"Come back in the shelter," Moro urged,

pulling him by the arm. "Have you gone crazy? It couldn't be better. She left us of her own free will. Besides, girls like her always talk."

Aurelio had lost sight of that black speck and stood trembling, straining his eyes.

"Now I'll have a smoke. Be glad to," Moro said as he went back inside. When, a few minutes later, Aurelio joined him and threw himself down on the sacks, Moro went on curtly: "Have a cigarette. Never mind. You shall do it first another time."

Composition

for John Berger

Courbet might have painted this
gigantic head: heavy, yellow
petal-packed bloom of the chrysanthemum.

He would have caught the way
the weight of it looms from the cheap-green
vase this side the window it lolls in.

But he would have missed the space
triangled between stalk and curtain
along a window-frame base.

The opulence of the flower
would have compelled him to ignore
the ship-shape slotted verticals

of the door in the house beyond
dwarfed by the wand of the stem;
and the gate before it would not

have echoed those parallels to his eye
with its slatted wood, its two
neat side-posts of concrete.

The triangle compacts the lot: there
is even room in it for the black
tyre and blazing wheel-hub of a car

parked by the entrance. But the eye
of Courbet is gluttoned with petals
as solid as meat that press back the sky.

Charles Tomlinson

Konrad Lorenz

On Aggression

Fish, Birds, Rats & Men (I)

S UDDENLY I realised that I was rather cold, and as I climbed the coral wall into the warm air and golden sun of Florida, I tried to formulate my underwater observations in a few short sentences: the brilliant poster-coloured fish are all local residents and it is only these that I have seen defending a territory. Their furious attack is directed towards members of their own species only, except, of course, in the case of predatory fish in which, however, the motive of the pursuit is hunger and not real aggressiveness. Never have I seen fish of two different species attacking each other, even if both are highly aggressive by nature.

I already knew from observations in the aquarium how furiously the brightly coloured coral fish fight their own species, and I had already formed an opinion on the biological meaning of these fights. I went to Florida Keys to test this hypothesis and if the facts disproved it I was ready to throw it overboard—or rather to spit it out through my snorkel, for one can hardly throw something overboard when one is swimming under water. It is a good morning exercise for a research scientist to discard a pet hypothesis every day before breakfast. It keeps him young.

Some years ago I began to study brightly coloured reef fish in the aquarium, impelled not only by my aesthetic pleasure in their beauty,

but also by my attraction to “interesting” biological problems. The first question that occurred to me was: why are these fish so colourful? When a biologist asks “What is the aim or purpose of something?” he is not trying to plumb the depth of meaning of the universe or of this problem in particular, but he is attempting much more humbly to find out something quite simple and, in principle, open to solution. Since we have learned, through Charles Darwin, about evolution and even something about its causes, the question, “What for?” has, for the biologist, a sharply circumscribed meaning. We know that it is the *function* of an organ that alters its form, in the sense of functional improvement; and when, owing to a small, in itself fortuitous, hereditary change, an organ becomes a little better and more efficient, the bearer of this character, and his descendants, will set a standard with which other, less talented members of his species cannot compete; thus in the course of time those less fit to survive will disappear from the earth’s surface. This ever-present phenomenon is called natural selection and is one of the two great constructors of evolution. The other constructor is mutation, which provides the material for natural selection. With remarkable foresight, Darwin postulated mutation as a necessity at a time before even the term had been coined.

All the innumerable, complex and expedient structures of plant and animal bodies owe their existence to the patient work performed in the course of millions of years by mutation and selection. We are even more convinced of this than Darwin was, and, as we shall soon see, with more justification. To some people it may seem disappointing that the many forms of life, whose harmonious laws evoke our awe and whose beauty delights our aesthetic senses, have

DR. KONRAD LORENZ, *who is one of the most distinguished of comparative ethologists, is Director of the Max Planck Institute in Bavaria, and the author of King Solomon's Ring (1952) and Man Meets Dog (1954). His new book, On Aggression (a translation of Das Sogennante Böse, 1963), will be published this autumn by Methuen.*

originated in such a prosaic and casually determined way. But to the scientist it is a constant source of wonder that nature has created its highest works without ever violating its own laws.

OUR QUESTION "What for?" can receive a meaningful answer only in cases where both constructors of evolution have been at work in the manner just described. Our question simply asks what function the organ or character under discussion performs in the interests of the survival of the species. If we ask "What does a cat have sharp, curved claws for?" and answer simply by saying, "To catch mice with," this does not imply a profession of any mythical teleology, but the plain statement that catching mice is the function whose survival value, by the process of natural selection, has bred cats with this particular form of claw. Unless selection is at work, the question "What for?" cannot receive an answer with any real meaning. Whenever we come upon highly regular, differentiated and complicated structures, such as a bird's wing or the intricate mechanism of an instinctive behaviour pattern, we must ask what demands of natural selection caused them to evolve, in other words, what they are for. We ask this question with assurance, in the confident hope of an intelligible answer, for we have found that we usually get one provided the questioner perseveres enough. This is not disproved by the few exceptional cases where scientific research has not yet been able to solve some of the most important of all biological problems, such as the question of what the wonderful forms and colours of mollusc shells are for, as the inadequate eye of these animals cannot see them, even when they are not—as they often are—hidden by the skin-fold of the mantle and in the darkness of the deep-sea-bed.

THE LOUD COLOURS of coral fish call loudly for explanation. What species-preserving function could have caused their evolution? I bought the most colourful fishes I could find and, for comparison, a few less colourful and even some really drab species. Then I made an unexpected discovery: in the case of most of the really flamboyant poster-coloured coral fish, it is quite impossible to keep more than one individual of a species in a small aquarium. If I put several members of the same species into the tank, there were

vicious fights and within a short time only the strongest fish was left alive. Later, in Florida, it impressed me deeply to watch in the sea the same scene that I had always observed in my aquarium after the fatal battles: several fish, but only one of each species, each brightly coloured but each flying a different flag, living peaceably enough. At a small breakwater near my hotel, *one* beau gregory, *one* small black angel-fish and *one* butterfly-fish lived in peaceful association. Peaceful coexistence between two individuals of a poster-coloured species occurs, in the aquarium or in the sea, only among those fishes that live in a permanent conjugal state. Such couples were observed, in the sea, among blue angel-fish and beau gregory, and in the aquarium among brown, and among white-and-yellow butterfly-fish. The partners are inseparable and it is interesting to note that they are more aggressive towards members of their own species than single fish are.

In the sea, the principle "Like avoids like" is upheld without bloodshed, owing to the fact that the conquered fish flees from the territory of his conqueror, who does not pursue him far; whereas in the aquarium, where there is no escape, the winner often kills the loser, or at least claims the whole container as his territory and so intimidates the weaker fish with continual attacks that they grow much more slowly than he does; and so his dominance increases till it leads to the fatal conclusion.

IN ORDER TO OBSERVE how territory "owners" normally behave, one needs a container big enough for at least two territories of a size normally commanded by the species under examination. We therefore built an aquarium six feet long, holding more than two tons of water and big enough for several such territories of various species of smaller, coastal fish. In the poster-coloured species, the young are nearly always not only more colourful and fiercer but also more firmly attached to their territories than the adults are. Since the young are small, we could observe their behaviour in a comparatively limited space.

Into this aquarium my co-worker Doris Zumpe and I put small fish, one to two inches in length, of the following: seven species of butterfly-fish, two species of angel-fish, eight species of demoiselles (the group to which the starry-skies and the beau gregory belong), two species of trigger-fish, three species of wrasse,

one species of doctor fish, and several species of non-poster-coloured, non-aggressive fish, such as trunkfish, puffers, and others. Thus there were about twenty-five species of poster-coloured fish, with an average of four per species, more of some, only one of others, a total of roughly a hundred individuals. They settled in very well, with almost no losses; they started to flourish—and according to programme, they began to fight.

NOW CAME the chance of counting something. When the “exact” scientist can count or measure something, he experiences a pleasure which, to the outsider, is hard to understand. Admittedly we would know only a little less about intra-specific aggression if we had not counted but our results would be much less convincing if we could only say, “Brightly coloured coral fish hardly ever bite any other species than their own”; however, we, or to be more exact, Doris counted the bites, with the following result: since there were about one hundred fish in the aquarium and each species was represented by an average of four, the chances of a fish biting one of its own species were three to ninety-six; but the proportion of bites inflicted on members of the same species to the bites given to other species was roughly eighty-five to fifteen. And even this small number of fifteen was misleading, because these bites came almost entirely from the demoiselles which in the aquarium stay in their caves all the time, invisible from without, and attack every intruder regardless of the species. In nature, they, too, ignore fishes of other species. Later on we omitted this group and obtained much more impressive figures.

A further proportion of the bites inflicted on fishes of different species came from those individuals which had no members of their own species in the container and therefore had to discharge their anger on other objects. Their choice of objects confirmed the correctness of my supposition as convincingly as did the more exact figures. For example, there was a single member of an uncertain species of butterfly-fish whose form and markings were so exactly intermediate between the white-and-gold and the white-and-black butterfly fish that we called him the white-gold-black, and he evidently shared our opinion of his classification for he divided his attacks almost equally between the representatives of those two species and was never seen to bite a member of a third species.

The behaviour of our single blue trigger (*Odonus niger*) was even more interesting. The zoologist who gave this fish its Latin name can only have seen it as a corpse in formalin, for the live fish is not black but luminous blue, suffused with a delicate violet and pink, particularly evident at the edges of the fins. I bought only one specimen of this fish because I realised, from the fights in the dealer's tank, that my own tank would be too small for two of these two-and-a-half-inch fish.

In the absence of a fellow member of his species, my blue trigger-fish behaved peaceably for a time, administering only a few bites, significantly between two quite different species. Firstly he pursued the so-called blue devils, near relations of the blue gregory, which had the same beautiful beau colour as himself; and secondly he attacked the two members of another trigger-fish species, the so-called Picasso fish. As its name indicates, the markings of this fish are extraordinarily colourful and bizarre, but it resembles the blue trigger in its outward form if not in its colour. After a few months, the stronger of the two Picassos had dispatched the weaker into the realm of formalin, and a strong rivalry sprang up between the survivor and the blue trigger. Doubtless the increased aggression of the latter towards the Picasso was influenced by the fact that his old enemies, the blue devils, had meanwhile changed from the bright blue of their youth to their drab, dove-grey adult dress which had a less fight-eliciting effect. Finally, the blue trigger killed the Picasso. I could cite many more such cases where, in similar experiments, only one fish survived. In cases where, as a result of pairing, two fishes behaved as one, one pair remained, as in the brown, and the white-and-gold butterfly-fish. Numerous cases are also known where other animals, besides fish, in the absence of a member of their own species, discharged their aggression on other objects, choosing for the purpose close relations or species with colouring similar to their own.

These aquarium observations, confirmed by my sea studies, prove the rule that fish are far more aggressive towards their own species than towards any other.

NOW THERE ARE, as I have already described, a number of species which are not nearly so aggressive as the coral fish of my experiments. When one examines the aggressive and the more or less non-aggressive

species, it is evident that there is a connection between colouring, aggressiveness, and sedentary territorial habits. Among the fish that I examined in the free state, extreme aggressiveness, associated with territorial behaviour and concentrated on members of the same species, is found almost exclusively in those forms whose bright poster-like colour patterns proclaim their species from afar. In fact, it was this extraordinary kind of colouring that aroused my curiosity and drew my attention to the existence of a problem. Fresh-water fish can also be beautifully colourful and in this respect many of them can hold their own with marine fish, but apart from their beauty they contrast oddly with the coral fish.

The charm of the colouring of most fresh-water fish lies in its changeability: cichlids, labyrinth-fish, the red, green and blue male stickleback, the rainbow-coloured bitterling of our home waters, and many other forms well known to us through the home aquarium, illuminate their jewels only when they are glowing with love or anger. In many of these fish the degree of their emotion can be measured by their colouring which also shows whether aggressiveness, sexual excitement or the flight urge is uppermost. Just as a rainbow disappears when a cloud covers the sun, so the beauty of the fish fades when the emotion that produced it wanes or is superseded by another conflicting emotion, such as fear, which quickly covers the fish with drab protective colouring. In other words, the colours of all these fish are a means of expression, only appearing when they are needed. Correspondingly, the young and often the females of these species have plain camouflage colouring.

The situation is different among the aggressive coral fish. By day, their glorious dress is as constant as if it had been painted on them in fast colours. It is only before going to sleep that most of them show their capacity for changing colour by putting on a night-dress whose design is amazingly different from their day attire, but as long as they are awake and active, they keep their flamboyant colours at all costs, whether they are hotly pursuing a fellow-member of their species or are themselves escaping in wild zig-zags from a pursuer. They would no more think of lowering their flag than would an English battleship in a novel by Forester. And even in transport containers, where they are certainly not at ease, and during illness, their gorgeous colours re-

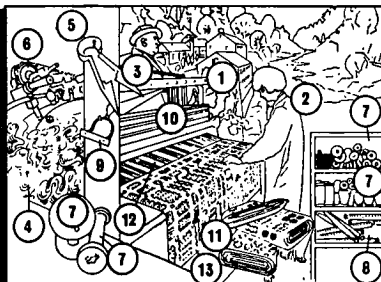
main unchanged; even after death it is a long time before they disappear entirely.

In all typical poster-coloured coral fish, not only are male and female both brightly coloured but even the tiny babies show brilliant colours which, strangely enough, are often quite different from those of the adults, and sometimes even more striking. Most amazing of all: in several forms, only the babies are multi-coloured, for example the starry-skies, and the blue devils, both of which change with sexual maturity into drab dove-grey fish with pale yellow tail fins.

The colouring of coral fish is distributed in large sharply contrasting areas of the body. This is quite different to the colour patterns not only of most fresh-water fish but of nearly all less aggressive and less territorial fish, whose charm lies in the delicacy of their designs, the harmony of their soft colouring, and the careful "attention to detail." When you see a grunt from a distance, you see an insignificant, greenish-silver fish, and only when he is right in front of you—a thing that may easily happen with these inquisitive creatures—do you notice the gold and sky-blue hieroglyphs clothing his body like an attractively designed brocade. Without any doubt these patterns are signals for the recognition of the species by its own members, but their design is such that it can be seen only at very close quarters by members of the species in the immediate vicinity. Conversely, the poster-colours of the territorially aggressive coral fish are so arranged that they can be seen and recognised from the greatest possible distance, and we know only too well that recognition of their own species provokes furious aggression in these fish.

MANY PEOPLE, even those with an understanding of nature, think that we biologists show a strange desire for superfluous knowledge when we want to know what functions every single coloured patch on an animal fulfils in the preservation of the species, and what causes could have led to its evolution. Indeed this curiosity is often attributed to materialism and a distorted sense of values. But every question that has a reasonable answer is justifiable, and the value and beauty of a natural object is in no way affected by our finding out why it is made in this and no other way. The scientist's attitude cannot be better expressed than as William Beebe once formu-

THE WELSH WOOLLEN MILL



TYPICAL OF WELSH WOOLLEN MILLS is Alltavan Mill **1** which snuggles on the bank of the river Teifi **2**, at Llandyssul. Address: Alltavan Mill, Pentrecwrt, Llandyssul, Cardigan. (Shell Touring Map No. 4 from your Shell dealer.)

The influx of Flemish weavers in the fourteenth century, and the characteristics of local breeds of sheep yielding fleece of good staple length and wool of hard-wearing quality, have both influenced the industry.

Hywel Dda makes reference to the industry as early as the tenth century when it was purely a domestic affair carried on in farm and homestead. Millowner Tom Jones **3**, gives visitors a warm welcome and delights in explaining the working of the mill.

The virgin wool **4** comes to the mill dirty, greasy and of different lengths. The sheep shears **5** are used for selecting the best part of the fleece, which is sorted and washed before going through a carding machine **6**. The spiked rollers of this machine pull the strand of

fluffy wool. This belt is pulled and twisted and is spun into yarn which is wound onto bobbins **7** and pirns **8**. A felting comb **9** is used to clean the carding machine. Weaving is done on old-fashioned yet efficient looms **10** across which the shuttles **11** fly to weave the weft or cross threads over and under the long warp threads **12**. To complete the process the cloth is washed, finished, pressed and dried.

Shown on the loom **13** is a gay and hard-wearing traditional Welsh tapestry bed cover.

Other mills are within easy reach of tourist routes and include the British Legion's Cambrian factory at Llanwrtyd Wells, Curlew Hill near Aberdovey, and Hannah Jones' Penmachno factory at Bettws-y-Coed. You can write for a list of Welsh woollen mills, to the Rural Industries Bureau, 35 Camp Road, Wimbledon Common, London, S.W.19.

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Illustration : Tom Adams



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lated it in his quaint manner: "The is-ness of things is well worth studying, but it is their why-ness that makes life worth living." We know, with tolerable certainty, the species-preserving function of the glorious war-paint of coral fish: it elicits furious reactions of territorial defence in every fish of the same species—and only of the same species—when the reacting individual is in its own territory; and it proclaims fear-inspiring readiness to fight to the intruder encroaching on foreign ground. Both functions are practically identical with those of another natural phenomenon whose beauty has inspired our poets—bird song.

If we test this theory by comparing the fighting behaviour of poster-coloured and non-poster-coloured fishes of the same genera and in the same environment, it proves itself particularly impressively when a poster-coloured and a plain-coloured fish belong to the same genus; for example, the sergeant-major, with its plain transverse bands, is a peaceful schooling fish, while its generic relation, the sharp-toothed *abudedefduf*, a gorgeous velvet-black fish with bright blue stripes on head and thorax and a yellow transverse band on its body, is about the fiercest of all the fierce territory owners that I met with during my coral fish studies. Our large aquarium proved too small for two tiny youngsters, scarcely an inch long, of this species; one claimed for itself the whole container and the other eked out its existence in the left upper front corner behind the bubbles of the air generator which hid it from the view of its disagreeable brother. Another good example is provided by comparing fish of the butterfly-fish genera. The only peaceful one I know is the four-eyed butterfly, and this is the only one whose characteristic design is broken up into such small details that it can be recognised only at very close quarters.

THE MOST REMARKABLE THING of all is that coral fish which are poster-coloured in youth and plain-coloured at sexual maturity show the same correlation between colouring and aggression: as babies they are furious defenders of their territory but as adults they are far more peaceable; in some, one has the impression that they are obliged to divest themselves of their fight-eliciting colours in order to make friendly contact between the sexes possible. This certainly applies to the demoiselle group; several times I saw a brilliantly black-and-white species spawning in the aquarium; for this purpose

changing their striking colouring for a monotonous dull grey, only to hoist the flag again as soon as spawning was over.

Anonymity of the Flock

BY "FLOCK" OR "HERD" I do not mean that chance gathering of like individuals such as occurs when many flies or vultures crowd round a carcass, or when many winkles or sea-anemones settle on a particularly favourable place in the tidal zone. The concept of the flock is determined by the fact that individuals of a species react to each other by attraction and are held together by behaviour patterns which one or more individuals elicit in the others. Thus it is typical of flock formation when many individuals travel in close formation in the same direction.

The questions confronting the behaviour physiologist who is trying to understand flock formation do not only concern the mechanisms causing the individual to seek the company of its own kind, but they also more particularly concern the high selectivity of these reactions. It calls for explanation when a herd animal wants at all costs to be near a lot of other members of its own species, and only in dire necessity will content itself with animals of other species as substitutes. This herding together may be innate, as for example in many ducks which react selectively to the signal of wing colouring in their own species by flying after it, or it may depend on individual learning.

We shall not be able to give a satisfactory answer to the many "Whys" regarding the herding together of anonymous crowds before we have solved the problem, "What for?"—in other words before we have answered Darwin's question concerning survival value. In trying to do this we meet with a paradox: it is easy to find a convincing answer to the apparently senseless question, "What is the good of aggression?"—its species-preserving functions. But it is extremely difficult to say wherein lies the survival value of the aggregation of the huge anonymous herds which we find in fish, birds and many mammals. We are too accustomed to seeing such communities, and since we ourselves are social beings we can appreciate that a herring, a starling, or a bison cannot feel happy by itself. And so it does not occur to us to ask, "What is it for?". However, the justification for this question will immediately be

apparent if we consider the obvious disadvantages of big herds, for instance the difficulty of finding enough food for so many animals, the impossibility of concealment, the increased predisposition to disease, and many other factors.

One would imagine that *one* herring swimming alone through the sea, *one* starling setting forth independently on its wanderings, or *one* lemming searching alone in times of famine for fertile fields, would have better chances of survival than would the dense crowds in which these animals herd together, and which provoke their own extermination by hunters and fishermen. We know that the drive forcing the animals together is a tremendously strong one, and that the attraction exercised by the herd over the individual or over smaller groups of individuals increases with the size of the herd, probably in geometrical proportion. Thus in many creatures, for example brambblings, a deadly vicious circle may arise. Under the influence of fortuitous external conditions, such as a particularly good beechnut harvest in a certain area, the flocking together of these birds may far exceed its usual extent, the avalanche-like swelling of numbers may exceed the ecologically supportable limit, and the birds may starve in masses. In the winter of 1951 I had the opportunity of studying an enormous flock of these birds on the Swiss Thunersee. Every day there were many corpses under their roosting trees. Post-mortem examinations revealed that the birds had died of starvation.

I think we can conclude, from the proven disadvantages of life in big herds, that there must be advantages which not only compensate for but also so far outweigh the disadvantages that a selection pressure has arisen causing the evolution among so many animals of a complicated behaviour mechanism of herding together.

IF HERD ANIMALS are in the smallest degree capable of defence against predators, such as are jackdaws, small ungulates and small monkeys, it is understandable that there should be safety in numbers. The repulsion of a predator or the succour of an assaulted member of the herd need not even be particularly effective in order to gain species-preserving value. The social defence reaction of jackdaws may not result in saving their fellow from a hawk, but if it is just annoying enough to make him hunt jackdaws a little less eagerly than magpies

and thus to make him prefer magpies as prey, this is enough to give social defence a very strong survival value. From such beginnings, and by comprehensible transitions, the heavily armed defence organisations of bull buffaloes, baboon males and similar heroes have evolved, from whose defensive power even the most terrible predators shrink.

But what advantage does close herding together bring to the completely defenceless, such as herrings and other small shoal fishes, small birds in enormous flocks, and many others? I can think of only one explanation and I offer it tentatively because, even to me, it seems scarcely believable that a single, small, but widespread weakness in predators could have wrought such far-reaching consequences in the behaviour of their prey: this weakness lies in the fact that many, perhaps all, predators which pursue a single prey are incapable of concentrating on one target if at the same time many others are crossing their field of vision. Just try yourself to catch a single specimen from out of a cage full of birds. Even if you do not want a particular individual but intend to empty the whole cage, you will be astonished to find how hard you have to concentrate on a specific bird in order to catch one at all. You will also notice how incredibly difficult it is to concentrate on a certain bird and not to allow yourself to be diverted by an apparently easy target. The bird that seems easier to catch is almost never caught, because you have not been following its movements in the immediately preceding seconds and therefore cannot anticipate its next movements. Moreover, you often end up by grabbing the void between two equally tempting objectives.

Many predators apparently do the same thing when offered a number of targets at the same time. It has been experimentally demonstrated that paradoxically goldfish catch fewer waterfleas when they are offered too many at once. Automatically radar-guided missiles behave in the same way when aiming at aeroplanes: they fly through the resultant between two targets if these are near together and arranged symmetrically on both sides of the projectile's trajectory. The predatory fish, like the radar-guided missile, lacks the ability to blind itself voluntarily to one objective in order to concentrate on the other. Probably herrings swim in close shoal formation for the same reason as jet fighters fly in close formation across the sky—a strategy not without danger even for expert airmen.

FAR-FETCHED THOUGH THIS explanation of a widespread phenomenon may seem, strong arguments speak for its correctness. As far as I know, there is not a single gregarious animal species whose individuals do not press together when alarmed, that is, whenever there is a suspicion that a predator is close at hand. The smallest and most defenceless animals do this the most noticeably, and in many fish species only the small, young ones do it, while the adults do not. When in danger some species of fish crowd together to form a body, so that they look like one big fish, and since many of the large rather stupid predators such as the barracuda meticulously avoid large prey for fear of choking, these tactics may be a special protection.

A further strong argument for the correctness of my assumption lies in the fact that evidently not a single one of the large predators ever attacks in the midst of a dense herd of its prey. Not only do the big predatory animals, such as lions and tigers, hesitate in the face of the defensive powers of their prey, before leaping on to an African buffalo in the herd, but even smaller hunters of defenceless game try, almost without exception, to separate a single animal from the herd before they attack it. Peregrine and hobby falcon have a special movement pattern serving this end alone. Beebe observed corresponding behaviour in fish in the sea. He saw a big amber jack following a shoal of little porcupine fish, waiting patiently until one of the small fish separated itself from the group to snap up some still smaller prey. Each time this happened the small fish met its end in the stomach of the big one.

SOME SOCIOLOGISTS are of the opinion that the family is the most primitive form of social aggregation, and that the different forms of communities in the higher animals have arisen from it phylogenetically. This theory may be true of several social insects, such as bees, ants and termites, and possibly of some mammals too, including the primates to which Man belongs, but it cannot be applied generally. The most primitive form of a "society" in the broadest sense of the term, is the anonymous flock, of which the shoal of ocean fish is the most typical example. Inside the shoal, there is no structure of any kind, there is no leader and there are no led, but just a huge collection of like elements. Of course these influence each other mutually, and

there are certain very simple forms of "communication" between the individuals of the shoal. When one of them senses danger and flees it infects with its mood all the others which have perceived its fear. How far the panic in a big shoal spreads, and whether it is able to make the whole shoal turn and flee is purely a quantitative question, the answer to which depends on how many individuals become frightened and flee and how intensively they do so.

Stimulus situations which attract the fish can be responded to by a whole shoal, even when only one individual has received the stimuli. The resolute swimming of this individual in one direction draws the other fish with it, and here again it is a question of quantity whether or not the whole shoal is pulled along.

The purely quantitative and, in a sense, democratic action of this process called "social induction" by sociologists means that a school of fish is the less resolute the more individuals it contains and the stronger its herd-instinct is. A fish which begins, for any reason, to swim in a certain direction cannot avoid leaving the school and thus finding itself in an isolated position. Here it falls under the influence of all those stimuli calculated to draw it back into the school. The more fish there are swimming in the same direction as a result of some exogenous stimulus, the more likely they are to draw the school with them; the bigger the school and its consequent counter-attraction, the less far its members will swim before they return to the school, drawn as by a magnet. A big school of small and closely herded fish thus presents a lamentable picture of indecision. Again and again a small current of enterprising single fish pushes its way forward like the pseudopodium of an amoeba. The longer such pseudopods become the thinner they grow, and the stronger becomes their longitudinal tension. Generally the whole advance ends in precipitate flight back to the heart of the school. Watching these indecisive actions one almost begins to lose faith in democracy and to see the advantage of authoritarian politics.

HOWEVER, IT CAN BE SHOWN by a very simple experiment how little justified this standpoint is. Erich von Holst removed from a common minnow the forebrain which, in this species, is the site of all shoaling reactions. The pithead minnow sees, eats and swims like a normal fish, its only aberrant behaviour property being

that it does not mind if it leaves the shoal unaccompanied by other fish. It lacks the hesitancy of the normal fish, which, even when it very much wants to swim in a certain direction, turns round after its first movements to look at its shoal-mates, and lets itself be influenced according to whether any others follow it or not. This did not matter to the brainless fish: if it saw food, or had any other reason for doing so, it swam resolutely in a certain direction and—the whole shoal followed it. By virtue of his deficiency the brainless animal had become the dictator!

THE IMPORTANT EFFECT of intra-specific aggression, dispersing and spacing out the animals of a species, is essentially opposed to that of herd attraction. Strong aggression and very close herding exclude one another, but less extreme expressions of the two behaviour mechanisms are not incompatible. In many species which form large flocks the individuals never come nearer to each other than a certain minimum distance; there is always a constant space between every two animals. Starlings, sitting like a string of pearls at exactly regular intervals along a telegraph wire, are a good example of this spacing. The distance between the individuals corresponds exactly to the distance at which two starlings can reach each other with their beaks. Immediately after landing they sit irregularly distributed, but soon those that are too close together begin to peck at each other and continue to do so until the "prescribed" *Individual Distance*, as Hediger appropriately called it, is established. We may conceive the space, whose radius is represented by the individual distance, as a very small, movable territory, since the behaviour mechanisms ensuring its maintenance are fundamentally the same as those which effect the demarcation of territory. There are also genuine territories, for example in the colony-nesting gannets, arising in the same way as the perching distribution of starlings: the tiny territory of a gannet pair is just big enough to prevent two neighbouring birds in the centre of their territories—that is when they are sitting on their nests—from reaching each other with the tips of their beaks if they stretch out their necks as far as they can.

It is only for the sake of completeness that I have mentioned here that gregariousness and intra-specific aggression are not entirely incompatible. In general, typical herd animals lack

aggressive instinct and with it any individual distance. Herring-like and carp-like fish huddle together when disturbed, but also when resting, almost to the point of physical contact; many fish which are territorial and highly aggressive during the reproductive season, lose all aggressive behaviour when they come together in swarms outside the breeding season. This applies to many cichlids, to sticklebacks, and many others. The non-aggressive psycho-physiological state of swarming can usually be deduced from the special colour patterns of the fish. Numerous bird species have the habit of retiring, outside the breeding season, into the anonymity of the flock. This is the case with storks, herons, swallows and a number of song birds in which there is no bond holding the partners together during the autumn and winter.

Only in a few bird species, for example swans, wild geese and cranes, do mates or parents and children keep together in the big migrating flocks. The large numbers of birds and the close formation of most big flocks must make it very hard for individual partners not to lose touch. But most species which form large herds, flocks or schools seem to set no store by such individual contacts. Their form of society is of necessity completely anonymous, every individual is just as content with any one fellow-member of the species as with that of any other, and the bonds of personal friendship, which seem so indispensable to us, simply do not occur in these species.

THE TIES WHICH HOLD such an anonymous flock together are very different indeed from those which lend strength and security to our own society. Nevertheless, one could imagine that personal friendship and love might well have developed in the lap of the peaceful anonymous society, a thought that suggests itself the more readily since the anonymous crowd undoubtedly evolved phylogenetically long before the personal bond. Anonymous flock formation and personal friendship exclude each other to a large extent because personal friendship is always coupled with aggression. We do not know of a single animal which is capable of personal friendship and which lacks aggression.

TO OUR HUMAN MIND personal friendship represents one of the most cherished values, and any social organisation not built

upon its basis inspires us with a chilling sense of the inhuman.

However, even the simple and seemingly innocuous mechanisms of anonymous flocking can turn into something not only inhuman but truly terrible. In human society these mechanisms remain more or less hidden, being superseded by non-anonymous well-organised relationships between individuals. But there is one contingency in which they erupt with the uncontrollable power of a volcano and gain complete mastery over Man, causing behaviour that can no longer be called human. This horrible recrudescence of the ancient mechanisms of flocking behaviour occurs in mass panic.

I was once an unwilling witness of the sudden emergence and rapidly snowballing effect of this process of dehumanisation, and if I was not drawn into its vortex it was only because, thanks to my knowledge of flocking behaviour, I had seen the approaching danger sooner than the others and had had time to guard against my own reactions.

Social Organisation without Love

I HAVE CONTRASTED the simple flock organisation of the anonymous individuals with the social order built on personal relationships in order to emphasise that these two mechanisms of social behaviour do, to a large extent, exclude one another; but this does not in any way imply that there are no other types of social organisation. Among animals there are other relationships between certain individuals which bind them for long periods, even for life, without the involvement of personal ties. Just as in human society there are business partners who work happily together but would never think of meeting outside office hours, so there are in many animal species individual ties arising only through a common interest of the partners in a joint "enterprise."

The anthropomorphising animal lover will not be pleased to hear that in many birds, including some that live in lifelong "matrimony," male and female have no interest in each other's company unless they have a common function to fulfil at the nest or in the service of the brood. An extreme case of such a bond in which the partners are bound neither by mutual recognition nor by love is seen in the tie called by Heinroth "local mating." Males

and females of the South European green lizard, for example, defend their territories against members of the same sex only. The male takes no action against an encroaching female, indeed he cannot because he is prevented by inhibition from attacking a female. The female cannot attack even a young male inferior to herself in strength, because an immense innate respect for the insignia of maleness prevents her from doing so.

But neither in our large and well-planned enclosure, forty yards square, nor in nature, is there an unlimited amount of tempting accommodation in the form of hollows between stones, holes in the earth and other such places. So it is inevitable that sometimes a male and a female, having no individual distance, move into the same dwelling. And since two dwellings are seldom equally useful and attractive, it is not surprising that in our enclosure a certain particularly favourable hollow, facing south, was soon occupied by the strongest male and the strongest female in our lizard colony. Though they do not have a particular preference for each other, animals living in such close contact copulate more frequently with each other than with a chance partner met on the territorial border. If one of the "local mates" was removed experimentally, it soon "got around" that a particular desirable male or female territory was vacant. Then severe territorial fights took place between the interested parties, with the usual result that by next day the next strongest male or female had taken possession of the dwelling-place and of the sexual partner too.

SURPRISINGLY, there is a fish which can accustom itself to its settled and harmless neighbour and so avoid the elicitation of unnecessary aggression. This fish is a member of a group well known for breaking fish records: the cichlids. In the North African oasis, Gafsah, there lives a little mouth-breeding cichlid about whose social behaviour we have learned through the close field observation of Rosl Kirchshofer. The males build a closely knit colony of nests, or rather spawning hollows, in which the females lay their eggs. As soon as they are all fertilised the female takes them in her mouth and transports them to other places, hatching them in shallow water, thickly grown with plants, where eventually the young are reared. Every male possesses only a relatively tiny territory and

this is almost completely filled by the spawning hollow which the fish constructs by fanning with his tail and digging with his mouth. Every male tries to entice every passing female into his hollow by certain ritualised courtship movements and by guiding the female to his own nest. The males spend a very large part of the year performing these tactics, in fact it is possible that they are in the spawning place all the year round. There is no reason to suppose that they often change their territory, thus every fish has plenty of time to get to know his neighbour and it has long been known that cichlids are capable of this. Dr. Kirchshofer performed the laborious task of catching all the males of a nesting colony and marking them individually. Every fish knew the owners of neighbouring territories very exactly and tolerated them peacefully at closest quarters, while he immediately attacked even farther away every stranger which approached his spawning hollow.

This peacefulness of the male mouth-breeders of Gafsah, depending on individual recognition of their fellows, is not yet a bond of friendship. In these fish there is not yet that attraction between personally acquainted individuals which keeps them permanently together—and this is the objectively demonstrable sign of friendship. But in a field of forces in which mutual repulsion is ever present every lessening of the active repulsive force between two particular objects has consequences which are, in effect, equivalent to attraction. In still another respect the non-aggression pact of neighbouring mouthbreeder males resembles true friendship: the lessening of repulsion, as well as the attraction of being friends, depends on the degree of acquaintanceship of the individuals concerned.

GENERALLY, other conditions being equal, mere acquaintance with a fellow-member of the species exerts a remarkably strong inhibitory effect on aggressive behaviour. Among human beings this phenomenon can regularly be observed in railway carriages, incidentally an excellent place in which to study the function of aggression in the spacing out of territories. All the rude behaviour patterns serving for the repulsion of seat-competitors and intruders, such as covering empty places with coats or bags, putting up one's feet, or pretending to be asleep, are brought into action against the unknown individual only. As soon as the newcomer turns out to be even the merest acquaint-

tance they disappear and are replaced by rather shamefaced politeness.

Rats

THERE IS a type of social organisation characterised by a form of aggression that we have not yet encountered: the collective aggression of one community against another. I will try to show how the malfunctioning of this social form of intra-specific aggression constitutes "evil" in the real sense of the word, and how this kind of social order represents a model in which we can see some of the dangers threatening ourselves.

In their behaviour towards members of their own community the animals here to be described are models of social virtue; but they change into horrible brutes as soon as they encounter members of any other society of their own species. Communities of this type possess too many individual animals for these to know each other personally, and in most cases membership of a certain society is identifiable by a definite smell common to all members.

In the huge communities of social insects it has long been known that their societies, often comprising millions, are basically families consisting of the descendants of a single female or pair which founded the colony. It is also well known that among bees, termites and ants, the members of such a large clan recognise each other by a characteristic hive, nest or anthill smell, and that murder occurs if a member of a strange colony inadvertently enters the nest. Massacres ensue if a human experimenter inhumanly tries to mix two colonies. It has, I think, been known only since 1950 that there are large families of rodents which behave similarly.

Steiniger put brown rats from different localities into a large enclosure which provided them with completely natural living conditions. At first the individual animals seemed afraid of each other; they were not in an aggressive mood, but they bit each other if they met by chance, particularly if two were driven towards each other along one side of the enclosure, so that they collided at speed. However, they only became really aggressive when they began to settle and take possession of territories. At the same time pair formation started between unacquainted rats from different localities. If several pairs were formed at the same time the ensuing fights might last a long time, but if one pair was formed before the others had started, the tyranny of the

united forces of the two partners increased the pressure on the unfortunate co-tenants of the enclosure so much that any further pair formation was prevented. The unpaired rats sank noticeably in rank and were constantly pursued by the two mates. Even in the 120-square-yard large enclosure, two or three weeks sufficed for such a pair to kill all the other residents, ten to fifteen strong adult rats.

THE MALE AND FEMALE of the victorious pair were equally cruel to their subordinates, but it was plain that he preferred biting males and she females. The subjugated rats scarcely defended themselves, made desperate attempts to flee, and in their desperation took a direction which rarely brings safety to rats, namely upwards. Steiniger repeatedly saw weary, wounded rats sitting exposed and in broad daylight high up in the bushes and trees, evidently outside occupied territory. The wounds were usually on the end of the back and on the tail, where the pursuer had seized them. Death was seldom caused by sudden, deep wounds or loss of blood but more frequently by sepsis, particularly in the case of bites which penetrated the peritoneum. But usually the animals died of exhaustion and nervous over-stimulation leading to disturbance of the adrenal glands.

A particularly effective and cunning method of killing fellow-members of the species was observed by Steiniger in female rats which became veritable murder-specialists. He writes,

They slink up stealthily, suddenly spring at their victim, which is perhaps eating innocently at the feeding-place, and bite it in the side of the neck, frequently injuring the carotid artery. The fight usually lasts only a few seconds, the mortally wounded animal bleeds internally, and on post-mortem profuse haemorrhages are found subcutaneously and in the body cavities.

HAVING WITNESSED the bloody tragedies which enabled the surviving couple finally to rule the whole enclosure, one would hardly expect to see the development of the society which is soon built up by the victorious murderers. The tolerance, the tenderness which characterises the relation of mammal mothers to their children, extends in the case of the rats not only to the fathers, but to all grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and so on. The mothers put their children into the same nest, and it is improbable that each mother tends only her own offspring. There are never any serious fights within the large family even when this comprises dozens of animals. In the wolf-pack, whose members are otherwise so considerate

of each other, the highest ranking animals eat first from the common prey. But in the rat-pack there is no ranking order, the pack attacks its prey in a body, and the strongest animals play the chief part in overcoming it. But in eating it, according to Steiniger:

The smaller animals are the most forward, the larger ones good-humouredly allow the smaller ones to take pieces of food away from them. In reproduction, too, the more lively half- and three-quarter-grown animals usually take precedence of the adults. All rights are open to them, and even the strongest adult puts nothing in their way.

Within the pack there is no real fighting, at the most there is slight friction, boxing with the fore-paws or kicking with the hind paws, but never biting; and within the pack there is no individual distance, on the contrary, rats are contact animals in the sense of Hediger, and they like touching each other. The ceremony of friendly contact is the so-called "creeping-under," which is performed particularly by young animals, while larger animals show their sympathy for smaller ones by creeping over them. It is interesting that over-demonstrativeness in this respect is the most frequent cause of harmless quarrels within the big family. When an older animal which happens to be eating is importuned too much by a younger one, it repels it by boxing and kicking.

Within the pack there is a quick news system functioning by mood-transmission, and, what is most important, there is conservation and traditional passing on of acquired experience. If the rats find a hitherto unknown food, according to Steiniger, the first rat to find it usually decides whether or not the family should eat it.

If a few animals of the pack pass the food without eating any, no other pack member will eat any either. If the first rats do not eat poisoned bait, they sprinkle it with their urine or faeces. Even when, owing to local conditions, it is extremely uncomfortable to deposit faeces on top of the poison, nevertheless it is often done.

But the most astonishing fact is that knowledge of a certain bait is transmitted from generation to generation and the knowledge long outlives those individuals which first make the experience. The difficulty of effectively combating the most successful biological opponent to man, the brown rat, lies chiefly in the fact that the rat operates basically with the same methods as those of Man, by traditional transmission of experience and its dissemination within the close community.

SERIOUS FIGHTS BETWEEN members of the same big family occur in one situation only, which in many respects is significant and interesting: such fights take place when a strange rat is present and has aroused intra-specific, inter-family aggression. What rats do when a member of a strange rat-clan enters their territory or is put in there by a human experimenter is one of the most horrible and repulsive things which can be observed in animals. The strange rat may run around for minutes on end without having any idea of the terrible fate awaiting it; and the resident rats may continue for an equally long time with their ordinary affairs till finally the stranger comes close enough to one of them for it to get wind of the intruder. The information is transmitted like an electric shock through the resident rat and at once the whole colony is alarmed by a process of mood transmission which is communicated in the brown rat by expression movements but in the house rat by a sharp, shrill, satanic cry which is taken up by all members of the tribe within earshot.

With their eyes bulging from their sockets, their hair standing on end, the rats set out on the rat hunt. They are so angry that if two of them meet they bite each other. "So they fight for three to five seconds," reports Steiniger, "then with necks outstretched they sniff each other thoroughly and afterwards part peacefully. On the day of persecution of the strange rat all the members of the clan are irritable and suspicious." Evidently the members of a rat-clan do not know each other personally, as jackdaws, geese and monkeys do, but they recognise each other by the clan smell, like bees and other insects. A member of the clan can be branded as a hated stranger, or vice versa, if its smell has been influenced one way or the other. Eibl removed a rat from a colony and put it in another terrarium specially prepared for the purpose. On its return to the clan enclosure a few days later, it was treated as a stranger, but if the rat was put, together with some soil, nest, etc., from this clan enclosure, into a clean, empty battery jar so that it took with it a dowry of objects impregnated with a clan smell, it would be recognised afterwards, even after an absence of weeks.

HEART-BREAKING WAS THE FATE of a house rat which Eibl had treated in the first way, and which in my presence he put back into the clan

enclosure. This animal had obviously not forgotten the smell of the clan but it did not know that its own smell was changed. So it felt perfectly safe and at home, and the cruel bites of its former friends came as a complete surprise to it. Even after several nasty wounds it did not react with fear and desperate flight attempts, as really strange rats do at the first meeting with an aggressive member of the resident clan. To softhearted readers I give the assurance, to biologists I admit hesitatingly, that in this case we did not await the bitter end but put the experimental animal into a protective cage which we then placed in the clan enclosure for repatriation.

Without such sentimental interference, the fate of the strange rat would be sealed. The best thing that can happen to it, as S. A. Barnett has observed in individual cases, is that it should die of shock. Otherwise it is slowly torn to pieces by its fellows. Only rarely does one see an animal in such desperation and panic, so conscious of the inevitability of a terrible death, as a rat which is about to be slain by rats. It ceases to defend itself. One cannot help comparing this behaviour with what happens when a rat faces a large predator that has driven it into a corner whence there is no more escape than from the rats of a strange clan. In the face of death it meets the eating enemy with attack, the best method of defence, and springs at it with the shrill war-cry of its species.

WHAT IS the purpose of group hate between rat-clans? What species-preserving function has caused its evolution? The disturbing thought for the human race is that this good old Darwinian train of thought can only be applied where the causes which induce selection derive from the extra-specific environment. Only then does selection bring about adaptation. But wherever competition between members of a species affects sexual selection, there is, as we already know, grave danger that members of a species may in demented competition drive each other into the most stupid blind alley of evolution. I have written of the wings of the argus pheasant—and the working pace of western civilised man—as examples of such errors of evolution.

(A concluding article—"Ecce Homo!"—will be published next month)



Column

IN HIS recent collection of essays, *Writers and Politics*, Mr. Conor Cruise O'Brien thought it worth while to reprint a review, originally published in the

New Statesman, of an anthology of contributions to ENCOUNTER during the first ten years of its existence. In that review, he particularly condemned Denis Brogan for describing ENCOUNTER, in his introduction, as "an organ of protest against the *trahison des clercs*." This was indeed high praise for any magazine, and the compliment would seem to have rankled in Mr. O'Brien's mind, for now, three years later, he has returned to the theme in an article in the *Washington Post's Book Week* and in an expanded version of it given as a lecture at New York University.

Now what was the *trahison des clercs* of which Professor Brogan described ENCOUNTER as the enemy, and Mr. O'Brien declares it to be guilty? The phrase was invented by Julien Benda as the title for his brilliant polemic against Barrès, Maurras, and the French right-wing intellectuals of the 'twenties who, in Benda's view, had prostituted and perverted their literary talents in the service of a political cause. In a more general sense, Benda would have applied the phrase to anyone who, for political reasons, is willing to abandon the virtues of objectivity, intellectual detachment, and scrupulous regard for truth which he held to have been the particular glory of the European intellectual since the days of Erasmus.

Benda, however, was not denouncing any intellectual who engages in political activity, of whatever kind. It was the intellectual weapons which the French right employed which aroused his contempt. Indeed, as Mr. O'Brien himself rightly points out, Benda's book was itself an act of political commitment; and it has continued to have a powerful influence as a criticism of all political movements, whether of the right or of the left, which demand of their adherents the total sacrifice of individual judgment, to the extent of abandoning all moral or intellectual standards except those that can be made to serve the political struggle. Benda was not asking that the intellectual should stand aloof from politics; he was asking that even in politics, and as his particular contribution to politics, the intellectual should

exercise the same critical intelligence, and the same commitment to reason, which was his distinguishing characteristic. Perhaps Benda was asking too much.

Mr. O'Brien at least could hardly claim to have satisfied this demand. Perhaps he does not want to, and perhaps that is why it irritates him to see this quality attributed to ENCOUNTER. He once described his own political activities on behalf of the United Nations in Katanga as those of "a Machiavelli of Peace." There is of course something slightly ludicrous in Mr. O'Brien's vision of himself as a latter-day disciple of Machiavelli, with Dag Hammarskjöld presumably as his Cesare Borgia, and his blunders in Katanga showed little of the fine Italian touch urged by Machiavelli on the Prince. But, if the phrase means anything, except as a flight of fancy, it means that, in the cause of peace, Mr. O'Brien was theoretically prepared to indulge in any of those subterfuges, stratagems, mendacities, betrayals, duplicities, which Machiavelli regarded as essential weapons in the Prince's armoury.

PERHAPS TODAY Mr. O'Brien may regret his attempt to emulate Machiavelli; certainly there are many in the Congo who have good reason to do so. Yet the air of bad faith combined with moral elevation which was implicit in his claim continues to impregnate his writings. In his Introduction to *Writers and Politics* he says: "One can hardly fail to have—unless one has ceased to be moved by any human cause—what W. B. Yeats called 'a touch of the propaganda fiend' in one's writing. And yet one feels the need for an effort of decontamination, the elimination of the lies, not merely of one's political enemies but also of one's political friends and—a more difficult and long term task—of one's own. . . ." One is tempted to say that hitherto Mr. O'Brien has been more conspicuous for his labours in the shorter and easier task than on the longer and harder one; as a beginning one might ask him to examine some of the implications of a later paragraph in his introduction.

The English-speaking critic and analyst [he writes] is—or should be—led to criticise and analyse the phenomena of his own contemporary culture, which is increasingly dominated by values prevalent in the United States of America. The distortions and misleading façades which he will most often encounter—I use the verb advisedly—are pro-American and anti-communist distortions and façades. He will of course be aware that in the communist world and in the poor world of Asia and Africa there are also distortions and façades, usually more blatant and therefore less insidious, than those prevalent in the West. As far as outside criticism can do

something to abolish the mendacity of the communist world and the poor world, that effort is being vigorously made by many writers, and I have not felt any great need to add my amateur efforts to those of the numerous professional critics of communist practice. My own guess is that the liberation of the communist world and of the poor world from their crude forms of mendacity will have to proceed from within and the liberation of the Western world from its subtler and perhaps deadlier forms of mendacity will also have to proceed from within.

Across this passage, of course, ENCOUNTER once again throws its shadow; it obsesses Mr. O'Brien as King Charles' head obsessed Mr. Dick. But the implications of the passage, which are the implications of the entire book, are worth examining. There is, first, the repeated identification of the communist world and the poor world, and the implication that their lies and façades are the same ones. There is the implication that those lies are so blatant as to be harmless, and need no criticism from us; they are the innocent lies of children rather than the really malevolent ones of adults, and in any case the poor communist world has its own writers like Daniel and Sinyavsky chipping away at its façades, just as we have Mr. O'Brien chipping away at ours. If Daniel and Sinyavsky suffer the martyrdom of prison for it, is it any worse than Mr. O'Brien's martyrdom in his richly endowed professorial chair in New York? And finally there is the implication that, where the mendacity of communism and poverty is so "crude" as to be innocuous, ours is so subtle as to be deadly. Those honest writers chipping away in Russia and Africa and Asia have after all the easiest time of it, because no one takes seriously the lies they are trying to expose; Mr. O'Brien in New York has much the harder time, because there the lies so subtly simulate truth that even Mr. O'Brien sometimes half believes them.

THERE IS SO STRANGE an air of unreality in this comparison of the Western and the communist world that one wonders if Mr. O'Brien really believes in it himself, or whether one should take it as one of those crude mendacities that deceive no one; the Dublin-Accra intellectual axis on which he operates seems so precariously related to the power struggles with which Mr. O'Brien is concerned that one feels inclined to dismiss it as yet another of the political fantasies to which Irish men of letters are sometimes prone. And indeed Mr. O'Brien himself sometimes seems to feel that his "effort of decontamination, the elimination of the lies," his own and others, is falling short of its goal, and at such moments of discouragement King Charles' head inevitably reappears.

The magazine ENCOUNTER [he writes in *Book Week*] has had such a central position in the English speaking world in the second half of the 20th century and such a mediating role between the writer and the capitalist power structures that it deserves... our particular attention. . . . A number of young British writers of moderate talents and adequate ambition co-operated actively in this anti-Communist but liberal programme. Some of these were progressive Tories, more were moderate socialists, on the right wing of the Labour Party. If, today, that party, in the throes of its success, seems too largely anaesthetised on issues to which its traditions should make it more sensitive—such as Viet Nam—this is due not entirely to humdrum economic conditions, relevant though these are, but also to an effective cultural and political penetration, of which ENCOUNTER was the spearhead. Similar penetrations took place elsewhere—for example in France, through ENCOUNTER's sister, *Preuves*, though with less success—and in the under-developed countries and among minority groups.

In a skilfully executed politico-cultural operation of the ENCOUNTER type, the writing specifically required by the power structure was done by people who were, as the Belgians used to say about Moïse Tshombe, *compréhensifs*, that is, they could take a hint. One or two of them were also highly competent in public relations. But the beauty of the operation was that other writers of the first rank, who had no interest in serving the power structure, were induced to do so unwittingly. Over the years the magazine, shrewdly edited, adequately financed, and efficiently distributed, attracted many writers who hardly noticed, or did not think it important, that this forum was not quite an open forum, that its political acoustics were a little odd, that the sonorities at the Eastern end were of a quite different character from the Western ones. Thus writers of high achievement and complete integrity were led unconsciously to validate, through their collaboration, the more purposeful activities of lesser writers who in turn were engaged in a sustained and consistent political activity in the interests—and as it now appears at the expense—of the power structure in Washington.

Surely even Mr. O'Brien must have some twinge of literary conscience when he writes such nonsense as this; it is as if J. Edgar Hoover had taken to what Mr. O'Brien calls "politico-cultural" criticism. For of what does such jargon as "cultural and political penetration," "skilfully operated politico-cultural operation," "consistent political activity in the interests of the power structure" remind us, if not, *mutatis mutandis*, of the kind of smears that used to be laid before the Un-American Activities Committee in the days when the junior Senator from Wisconsin was king? It will therefore come as no surprise to readers of this column

to learn that here they are employed as a gloss on Mr. O'Brien's revelation that behind the politico-cultural activities of the magazine stands the Central Intelligence Agency, the ice-cool brain of a world-wide conspiracy for which ENCOUNTER has provided the Protocols of Zion.

One naturally looks eagerly for the evidence with which Mr. O'Brien supports his revelation, just as one used to look once for the evidence which supported the Senator from Wisconsin's denunciations of communist penetration of the State Department. It is to be found apparently in the *New York Times*, which in a series of articles on the activities of the C.I.A. mentioned ENCOUNTER in a passing sentence which contained two errors of fact and typography.

Mr. O'Brien would not normally accept without hesitation the statement of so devoted a mouthpiece of the power structure as the *New York Times*. On this occasion, since it suits his purposes, he does: "*Steht in der Zeitung, muss wahr sein. . .*" It is significant that when the London *Times* reprinted the *New York Times* articles, the reference to ENCOUNTER was omitted, one hopes not only because of the danger of an action for libel but because the *Times*, unlike Mr. O'Brien, takes the trouble to verify its facts. And it is typical of the kind of "light" which, according to Mr. O'Brien, the *New York Times* has shed on ENCOUNTER, that, when asked to produce evidence for its statement, that newspaper did not produce any and refused to name the source from which it purported to come.¹

THE OSTENSIBLE SUBJECT of Mr. O'Brien's *Book Week* article was the topic of "The Writer as Public Figure" which was being discussed by the XXXIVth Congress of the International P.E.N. in New York. So far as it was not concerned with the politico-cultural machinations of ENCOUNTER, the article was a defence of the politically committed writer, and a protest against the belief that political activity

¹ It may also be typical that no reference was made to ENCOUNTER's letter of correction and denial, which the *N.Y. Times* published and followed with a repudiation of the defamatory implications of the original story; the Editor went on to affirm that nothing was said or intended to suggest that ENCOUNTER was anything but what it is known to be, namely, "a distinguished international journal of independent opinion" (10 May). In view of the *N.Y. Times'* editorial statement, several European newspapers and periodicals which had rushed to press with crude translations of the libel (e.g., the Copenhagen *Information*, the Hamburg *Stern*) promptly published retractions and apologies.

necessarily impairs him in his function as an artist. On both of these points I happen to agree with Mr. O'Brien. Yet, if he is sincere in his efforts at personal decontamination, he might take into account, as a contribution to this long-term task, the degeneration that has taken place in the methods he now uses to denigrate those with whom he politically disagrees. There can be no doubt, in my mind, that political engagement may enrich a writer both as a man and as an artist. But there seems to be equally no doubt that, once politically committed, the writer incurs the danger of a conflict between the expediences which politics demands and the intellectual integrity which is vital to him as an artist, between the half truths in which politics deals and the whole truths at which the writer aims.

The history of the last fifty years is rich in examples of writers who have experienced this conflict in its most painful form and who have only resolved it at the cost of the most agonising reappraisal of both the ends and the means of their political activity. It seems that in Mr. O'Brien it has claimed its latest victim. This is, in the case of a critic as gifted as himself, a matter for regret. Yet there are also elements of high comedy in the transformation of the Machiavelli of Peace into the Joe McCarthy of politico-cultural criticism, hunting for C.I.A. agents beneath the beds of Stephen Spender, Irving Kristol, Melvin Lasky, and Frank Kermode, and from his one-man radar station relentlessly tracking the path of the Q-ship ENCOUNTER as it sets course for the Bay of Pigs.

★

THE DEGENERATION of a literary critic is one thing; the decline of a great writer, to whom one has been indebted for intense and unique pleasures, is something quite different. It could be said that since the last war Ernest Hemingway's literary reputation has steadily declined. That classic of the *faux-bon*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, could not restore it. The award of the Nobel Prize seemed to set the seal on it. Only the posthumous publication of *A Moveable Feast* reminded us once again of what an immense and genuine talent Hemingway had once possessed. And as his literary reputation fell, and the royalties rose, the image of the writer he had once been gradually became displaced by the largely self-projected *persona* of the indomitable old man of literature, still all *cojones*, the Papa Hemingway who was a greater work of fiction than anything else he created.

The simultaneous republication by Penguin of four of Hemingway's books, to be followed

by a fifth, *Death in the Afternoon*, makes this an appropriate moment for a reappraisal of Hemingway's literary achievement, and fortunately there are two books at hand to assist us in the task. The first is a new, revised and enlarged edition of Philip Young's *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration*, (Pennsylvania State University Press) originally published in 1952 and still the best study available of Hemingway both as a man and as a writer. One of the most fascinating features of Professor Young's book, when it was originally published, was his analysis of the death wish which was finally satisfied by Hemingway's suicide. Today it reads like a scientific hypothesis which later events have verified.

The new edition includes the correspondence which ensued between Professor Young and Hemingway after the manuscript had been submitted to him. Hemingway disapproved of biography, in particular the kind of biography in depth practised by Professor Young; he believed that a writer has a right to the privacy of his own joys and miseries. With a generosity which recalls Shaw's to Frank Harris, he waived his objections to the book when he learned that its author was a penniless young university teacher and that its publication might substantially advance his academic career.

The second book, *Papa Hemingway*, by A. E. Hotchner (Random House), not yet published here, has already had a *succès de scandale* in America. For the last fourteen years of Hemingway's life Mr. Hotchner, a professional writer himself, was his intimate friend and companion and his book is a detailed record, based on notes taken at the time, of their friendship. What comes out most clearly in the record, in spite of the evidence it contains of Hemingway's gaiety, generosity, courage and vitality, is the progressive degeneration of his faculties until the time, shortly before his death, when he was admitted to the Mayo Clinic to be treated by E.C.T.; it

also records his mounting fantasies of persecution by the F.B.I. for totally imaginary charges of tax evasion. It is a tragic story: Mr. Hotchner might well have taken for it one of Henry James' titles: *Death of the Lion*.

IT IS ALL THE MORE tragic because of the contrast presented by Papa Hemingway, with his face heavily bearded to conceal skin cancer, with the boy Nick Adams of the marvellous stories of *In Our Time*. One of the most fascinating pages in Professor Young's book, which tells us almost more than all the rest of it, is occupied by a photograph of Hemingway as a boy up in the woods in Michigan in 1913. The photograph has an uncanny and timeless quality; it is a photograph of Nick Adams himself, but it is also an illustration to *Huckleberry Finn*, and in the years between them nothing has happened to change the bare-footed boy in the tattered straw hat and torn jeans holding up his line of fish on the banks of the stream; the immensely sensitive eager face that looks out at us from the floppy brim of his hat could have belonged to either.

What happened to change this boy into the Papa Hemingway of Mr. Hotchner's book is something we shall never know, in spite of the immense amount of autobiographical material embedded in Hemingway's novels and stories. But among the influences which helped to do so must certainly be included the quite astonishing series of physical injuries suffered by Hemingway in the course of his life, especially in the two aeroplane crashes, on two successive days, in Uganda in 1954. Nick Adams grew up into a maimed and crippled man, protesting his health and strength. Yet one believes Professor Young that this was only the end and not the beginning and that the first mysterious wound was received by the boy of the photograph somewhere up the Big Two-Hearted River. It is Nick Adams we shall remember, and not Papa Hemingway.

R.

THEATRE

Heroes of Our Time

By John Weightman

BY ONE OF THOSE flukes the *Zeitgeist* is sometimes capable of, two plays at present running in London stand in an almost perfect complementary relationship to each other. Arnold Wesker's *Their Very Own and Golden City* at the Royal Court presents us with a hero who has a positive obsession: he wants to begin at once building the perfect society of the future, which will consist of an artistically sensitive population living the good life in beautiful surroundings. John Osborne's *A Bond Honoured* at the National Theatre is centred on a character with a negative obsession: he rages against two different societies, the Sicilian Christian one in which he has been brought up and the Tunisian Moslem one to which he is transferred in adulthood. Indeed, his impatience with all societies is such that he deliberately provokes the surrounding community into violent reaction and, in the end, the Moslems take him at his word and crucify him.

Both plays are technically of the same type, which, I assume, is neo-Brechtian, *i.e.* they are not constructed in acts but consist of a succession of short scenes, each of which, instead of presenting psychological complexities as Shakespeare's short episodes usually do, makes a separate point (although this point may occasionally be ambiguous). The changes of scenery are carried out in full view of the audience, so that there can be no illusion of realism or identification, yet at the same time we are obviously meant to identify with the two heroes, who speak with the unmistakable voices of their creators.

The action of each play is sufficiently extended to give the fate of the hero the status of an exemplary life-story. It is not too much to say that both plays are strongly didactic in flavour. "This," Wesker seems to be saying in effect, "is what can happen to you if you try to build a better England. O God! O Centre 42!," while Osborne is once again showing us

Jimmy Porter, but this time in the guise of an aristocrat of the Spanish Golden Age, whose defiance of society is ultimately a challenge to God, the Establishment behind all Establishments. "Damn you, Father! Damn you, Establishment! Damn you, God!" is the sense of Leonido's protest. "I want to be crucified by you to make sure you are eternally in the wrong" and so he ends up, in a splendid theatrical finish, as a "camp" Christ, artfully draped on the cross, even more daringly naked than before, deliciously bleeding, quite Dali and endearing. It is interesting to see that the negative, aristocratic hero is turned into a justified sinner through the aesthetic glory of his end, whereas Wesker's Andrew Cobban, the working-class boy with the positive, aesthetic aim, fades out in the dreariest possible manner, disappointed, knighted and senile, playing bridge with the upper classes, while his working-class wife stays in the kitchen. True, the final scene takes us back to his youth and we see him once more outlined against a window of Durham Cathedral that was his early inspiration, so that something of the ideal may be thought permanent, even if the individual has been vanquished by life. It is also interesting to note that both plays use a religious décor for theatrical effect, although neither author, presumably, is a Christian or a religious believer of any kind.

IN FACT, the cathedral window and the beautiful crucifixion give one seriously to think. The first corresponds to the neo-Platonic idealism, the second to the sado-masochism inherent in Christianity, and these symbols have no doubt been borrowed by Mr. Wesker and Mr. Osborne because of the appropriateness to their respective temperaments. If I may put it this way, Wesker tends towards the "goody-goody," Osborne towards the "baddy-baddy." In other words, they have opposite attitudes towards the problem of evil. Wesker wants to eliminate evil and has,

regretfully, to conclude that it exists, whereas Osborne needs it to stimulate his verve and is inclined to invent it, where it is not already present. There is nothing fundamentally new about these attitudes, which have occurred from time to time in Europe, in complementary fashion, ever since the first major break-up in religious faith in the sixteenth century. The novelty lies simply in the contemporary colouring of the two works.

ACTUALLY, John Osborne has borrowed his theme from Lope de Vega, who lived half in the sixteenth century and half in the seventeenth. Since the text of *La Fianza Satisfecha*, from which *A Bond Honoured* is said to be adapted, is not readily available, I can only guess at the changes that have been made. A programme note tells us that the play:

... adapts with ease to the concerns and anxieties of our day. Leonido is a natural existential hero. From the very beginning he relentlessly seeks to destroy all accepted social and religious norms. He is a desperate man, alone, seeking his own identity. ... He rejects in order to find. He must discover his individual freedom and identity before he can be at peace with himself and the world. To do this he becomes an outrageous saint.

Well, perhaps so in the original work, if Lope de Vega was basically a Catholic, not a free-thinker. What one guesses, through the English text, is that Leonido, like most incarnations of Don Juan, is a flamboyant Renaissance individualist who denies the Christian God and then, at the last gasp, is reconverted to Christianity and accepts his punishment with due humility. This, one imagines, is the meaning of the scene in which he draws the emblems of Christ's Passion—the blood-stained shirt, the rope, the crown of thorns—from a shepherd's pouch and puts them on. At the same time, in the original, the ending may be just as ambiguous as the final destruction of Don Juan in Molière's play and Mozart's opera, *i.e.* it may be a mere acceptance of convention for the sake of winding up the action. But in Osborne's play, the ending does not seem to make much sense at all; it cannot be a sop to the orthodox because, in our largely non-believing society, Osborne doesn't need to bow to convention; it doesn't argue the case for the acceptance of the Christian myth after a career of deliberate immorality; nor does it show us a character achieving self-realisation outside religious revelation. Osborne provides no explanation, either rational or imaginative, of the bond that his hero is honouring. Leonido's behaviour is just a fit of metaphysical tantrums. Frankly, I agree

with the critics who confessed themselves baffled by the play, and it is no good John Osborne complaining that these puny creatures understand neither passion nor violence. Indiscriminate passion and violence are just so much sound and fury. To my knowledge, this play, or something very like it, has already been written thrice in the modern French theatre: in Montherlant's *Malatesta*, Camus' *Caligula* and Sartre's *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*; none of the three is outstandingly good, I should say, but all are rather better than *A Bond Honoured*, because they are more complex in structure.

The real question is: why waste energy ranting against God, if He doesn't exist? If the problem is a human one, it needs to be approached on a different level. John Osborne's bare-chested Leonido rampages about the stage, *faisant des effets de torse*, kicking his old servant, copulating with his sister, blinding his father and getting the better of a whole lot of characters who are never allowed to be anything more than cyphers. After each display of hollow intellectual and emotional virility, one is tempted to ask: "*Eh alors?*", like the French lady who found herself faced with an exhibitionist in a railway carriage. This is an excellently staged theatrical romp and little more.

BUT I MUST declare my prejudice. French literature has given me my fill of metaphysical fist-shakers, and in any case I am much happier in Arnold Wesker's I.L.P. atmosphere. His programme notes, instead of praising the alienated hero, quote William Morris and Bruce Glazier. This at once warms the cockles of my heart, because my brother was christened William Morris and, although I never saw Bruce Glazier, I have a fond memory of Mrs. Bruce Glazier, all ardour and draperies, who taught me to draw ducks by means of four inter-locking ellipses, when I was still a toddler. Not a very auspicious introduction to art, perhaps, but a detail that can help to explain how much I sympathise with the theme of Mr. Wesker's play, which is the longing, on the part of someone brought up in the Labour Party in the 'twenties and 'thirties, to build the New Jerusalem in England's black, depressing land.

To some extent, I also share the disappointment which informs the play. It is true that, instead of the organic Utopia, we now have motor-ways and the Post Office Tower and a sprawling, indefinite society, much better than many, no doubt, but nevertheless far removed from the coherent human and aesthetic community of the reformer's dream. But here again, although the stage performance is admirably vital, I cannot feel that the problem is squarely

posed in the play. Andrew Cobban is an architect who wants to build Golden Cities, in which each family will have its house that it saves up for in advance. We are told that these houses are marvellous, and that the real centres of the Cities are not the town halls but the theatres and art galleries, and considerable suspense is generated around the question: will the Trade Unions agree to finance the industry that the Cities need? However, the nature of these marvellous houses, the quality of the industrial activity to be carried on in the cities, the sort of art in the galleries and theatres, the texture of human living, the exact relationship between these islands of bliss and the surrounding national and political society—all this is left unexplained, and it is precisely this that should be imaginatively conveyed if the project is to be really convincing.

As it is, the problems treated are all peripheral: who will inspire Andy? Not his working-class wife who dwindles into a slightly resentful house-keeper, but an upper-class woman who goads him on in his moments of discouragement. Who will give him the necessary industrial aid? Not the Trade Unions, but enlightened capitalists, through the intervention of a Conservative minister, who becomes Andy's best friend. *Their Very Own and Golden City* begins in the heroic days of the I.L.P. but, by the final scenes, one is beginning to feel that it might have been written by a subtle Conservative propagandist to prove that the only people

who have the wit to appreciate and help clever working-class boys are the more perceptive members of the Establishment. "Men need leaders," Andy muses sadly in his later phase, "There may be no such thing as democracy." One almost expects him to launch forth into praise of the good, old-fashioned public schools.

It is honest of Arnold Wesker to put the Conservative case so frankly through the medium of an ostensibly Socialist figure, but it also militates against the central credibility of the play, because if Andy is an extraordinary man, capable of bringing into being even one Golden City, he must have known the partial truth contained in Conservatism from the start, and have transcended it in his Socialist philosophy. Of course men need leaders, but there are many different kinds of leaders and many different kinds of relationships between the leaders and the led. This is political philosophy, which Andy seems to be discovering with some surprise at the end of his career, instead of at the beginning. To create a Golden City, he would have had to be not only an architect but an all-round political genius, with a non-sentimental view of the balance of good and evil in human nature. Such a genius might, of course, have weaknesses or contradictions of character that would give tragic intensity to the action. But none of this is suggested. Andy is well-meaning enough, but you need more than golden intentions to build Golden Cities. His final crucifixion on a knighthood proves him to be just a sort of dim counterpart to Leonido.

In Hertfordshire

Looking down at the village,
in the wind, in the winter
in Hertfordshire,
they saw that the chimneys were praying,
warming the small insides of the houses
as the smoke swept into the air.

The Mother

Of course I love them; they are my children.
That is my daughter and this my son.
And this is my life I give them to please them.
It has never been used. Keep it safe. Pass it on.

Anne Stevenson

POETRY

To Traduce or Transfigure

On Modern Verse Translation — By GEORGE STEINER

THAT IT IS untranslatable is one of the definitions offered of poetry. What remains after the attempt, intact and uncommunicated, is the original poem. So affirmed du Bellay, the French poet and rhetorician of the early 16th century, so, more recently, Robert Frost. A poem is language in the most intense mode of expressive integrity, language under such close pressure of singular need, of particularised energy, that no other statement can be equivalent, that no other poem even if it differs only in one phrase, perhaps one word, can do the same job. The poem is because nothing exactly like it has been before, because its very composition is an act of unique designation, of naming some previously anonymous or inchoate experience as Adam named the creatures of life. A painting divides space between itself and the whole; so a poem divides experience between itself and "otherness." How can identity be translated into anything but itself? This is the admonition of Borges' acid fable of a man translating *Don Quixote* into identical Spanish, line by line and word for word.

Add to this the nature of poetic language. The distinctive beat of any given tongue, that sustaining undercurrent of inflection, pitch relations, habits of stress, which give a particular motion to prose, is concentrated in poetry so that it acts as an overt, characteristic force. Poetry will not translate any more than music. Verse forms, the shape of the stanza, the conventional or innovating directives of rhyme, the historical, stylistic discriminations which a language makes between its prosaic and poetic idiom, the counterpoint it sets up between colloquial and formal, these also defy translation. As does the immediate visual code of long and short words, of capitalisation and accentual mark in German, say, or Spanish. And how can a translation carry over into a Roman alphabet the pictorial suggestions, the relations of space and graphic incitement which are a vital part of the total statement made by a Chinese or Persian lyric?

In short: because a poem enlists the maximal range of linguistic means, because it articulates the code of any given language at its most incisive—all other poems in the language being a part of the informing context—poetry may be paraphrased, imperfectly mimed but "indeed cannot be translated." To which Dr. Johnson adds, "and therefore it is the poet that preserves language."

BUT LET US OBSERVE the argument closely. It cuts much deeper than verse. It implicates even rudimentary acts of linguistic exchange, the attempt to translate any word or sentence from one language into another. A language is not a passive representation of reality, it does not restrict itself to being a mirror. It is an active world image, selecting certain possibilities of human analysis and behaviour, certain ways of initiating, structuring, and recording experience from a total potentiality of representation. Each language cuts out its segment of reality. We live our world as we speak it (to ourselves or to others), as it feeds back to us through the particular linguistic code most immediate to our culture and personal upbringing. We cast the net of our own language over the multiplicity of living forms. Loosely woven, it will draw in experience in gross, indiscriminate lumps; the landscape of being is made incoherent and monotonous by illiterate speech. Close knit, the language-net makes available to us the largest possible range—possible to our physiological and historical condition—of differentiated, mastered, potentially related elements.

A large vocabulary signifies a literal wealth and concreteness of felt life. A developed syntax engenders those perceptions of interrelation, those creative re-groupings of thought and action called metaphor. Without metaphor a society remains static, repetitive, as is a child's song. Our world, the way we move among its total possibilities, spring from grammar, from the pattern by which we relate identity, verb, and object. Each grammar differs in some

**Take that Perique
in Three Nuns Tobacco:**

**First
we cut it, hang it,
separate it, clean it, twist it,
and then place it snugly
into oak barrels.**

**Then we apply pressure to bathe
the leaves in their own juice.**



**Two weeks later
we rework it, untwist it,
air it, then retwist it.**



**We do this at least three times,
often more often.**



**We do all these very
complicated things so that when
you put Three Nuns in your pipe and
smoke it, you'll simply enjoy it.**

6/11½ the ounce



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degree from any other. Thus there is not the same life-image in *j'ai mal à la tête* as in *mi duole il capo*. Neither is exactly equivalent, though one is nearer than the other, to *I have a headache*. No two languages mesh perfectly, no two languages—and there may be some three thousand spoken by men—set the world in the same order.

EVEN THE SIMPLEST words, indeed they especially, carry a charge of specific energy, of historical association, social usage, and syntactic tradition. They rise to the surface of speech from great depths of national or regional sensibility, barnacled with undeclared remembrance. *Pain* is not wholly rendered by *bread*. It has to a French ear resonances of want, of radical demand, which the English word does not; the two words differ in historical texture as does a French from an English loaf. There is no synonym in either French or English for the German *Heimat* (though *terroir* carries some of the relevant overtones). The interweaving of concrete and spiritual patrimony, of obligation and pride, concentrated in the German term has no full equivalent in the English vocabulary nor, through crucial, necessary correspondence of idiom with world-image, in English historical and political practice. We can define the Greek optative as a mood of the verb articulating wish, desire, uncertain hope; but no optative can be completely reproduced in a grammar, one would almost say in a metaphysic, which lacks this particular shade of futurity. Or to cite an example familiar to Biblical translation: as there is no concept of snow, hence no word for it, in a number of African languages, the conventional equivalent for *white as snow* is *white as egret feathers*. This "equivalent" is entirely devoid of the tactile, emotive overtones, of the latent metaphors of chill, shrouding action, even of the colour-spectrum associated with our Middle-English, ultimately Sanskrit word.

THERE ARE NO total translations: because languages differ, because each language represents a complex, historically and collectively determined aggregate of values, proceedings of social conduct, conjectures on life. There can be no exhaustive transfer from language *A* to language *B*, no meshing of nets so precise that there is identity of conceptual content, unison of undertone, absolute symmetry of aural and visual association. This is true both of a simple prose statement and of poetry.

The point is worth stressing. Where they engage, as they must, the root fact of linguistic autonomy, the fact that different grammars delineate different realities, arguments against

verse translation are arguments against all translation. The difference is one of intensity, of technical difficulty, of psychological apprehension. Because a poem springs from the core of a language, commemorating and renewing the world view of that language at its deepest level, the risks taken in translation are greater, the waste or damage done more visible. But a gritty colloquialism will frequently offer a resistance as vital and obstinate.

Each act of translation is one of approximation, of near miss or failure to get within range. It tells of our fragmented legacy, and of the marvellous richness of that legacy—how meagre must the earth have been before Babel, when all spoke alike and communicated on the instant. The case against translation is irrefutable, but only if we are presented, in Ibsen's phrase, with "the claims of the ideal." In actual performance these claims cannot be met or allowed.

They have been discarded, obviously, in our economic, political, private affairs. Men's undertakings proceed by linguistic barter in a zone of approximate, utilitarian definition. School primers, tourists' phrase-books, manuals of commercial and technical usage, our ordinary lexica, establish a neutral ground of rough-edged but indispensable concordance. The multiplicity of scientific developments, the fact that science operates internationally and at its own forward edge, have made of the translation of scientific papers a large-scale, urgent enterprise. Some of the difficulties met resemble those which arise in the translation of poetry, the main difference being that mathematics is a true esperanto, a perfectly conventional yet dynamic code such as no artificial or inter-language can be.

TRANSLATION is equally essential to humanism, to the continued life of feeling. We translate perpetually—this is often overlooked—when we read a classic in our own tongue, a poem written in the 16th century or a novel published in 1780. We seek to recapture, to revitalise in our consciousness the meanings of words used as we no longer use them, of imaginings that have behind them a contour of history, of manners, of religious or philosophic presumptions radically different from ours. Anyone reading Donne or Jane Austen today, or almost any poem or fiction composed before 1915 (at about which date the old order seems to recede from the immediate grasp of our sensibility), is trying to recreate by exercise of historical, linguistic response; he is, in the full sense, translating. As is the player who acts Shakespeare or Congreve, making that which was conceived in a society, in a style of feeling, in an expressive convention sharply different from that of the

modern, actual, active to the touch of our mind and nerve.

No language, moreover, however comprehensive, however resourceful and inclusive its syntax, covers more than a fraction of human realisation. There are, at every moment and on every horizon, worlds beyond our own words. Hence the urge to cross the barriers of national speech, the effort to make other insights, other tools of awareness, available. What man has the linguistic wealth needed to read in the original, Homer, the Bible, Shakespeare, Pascal, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the poems of Li Po and *A Tale of the Genji*? Yet which would one be prepared to do without or discard from the adventure of literacy? A major, perhaps a dominant element in our culture, in the fabric of our consciousness, is inevitably translation. "Say what one will of its inadequacy," wrote Goethe to Carlyle, "translation remains one of the most important, worthwhile concerns in the totality of world affairs." Without it we would live in arrogant parishes bordered by silence.

SO MUCH will probably be allowed by almost anyone. But what of the more special argument that poetry should not be translated into poetry—that the only honest translation of a poem is a literal trot or a prose paraphrase? This is clearly implied in Dante's statement, "nothing which is harmonised by the bond of the Muses can be changed from its own to another language without having all its sweetness destroyed." It is the conclusion arrived at by Sir Richard Burton when considering the translation of Arabic verse. Today it is put most drastically by Vladimir Nabokov: "The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase." To say that Dante and Nabokov have themselves produced brilliant verse translation, that the art of poetic translation is almost as old as poetry itself, that it continues intensely alive, is true enough. But it is no refutation. The case for the interlinear or the prose paraphrase is, in fact, a strong one.

It can be met only if the exercise of poetic translation exhibits advantages, means of critical understanding, qualities of linguistic gain which no prose version matches. It must be shown that there is even in the inevitable compromise of verse translation, even in its necessary defeats—perhaps characteristically in these—a creative residue, a margin of experience if not fully communicated illumination which no trot or prose statement offers. It is precisely this, I think, which *can* be shown. A "clumsy literal translation" of a living poem is none at all; a prose paraphrase is an important auxiliary, but

no more. To find active echo, a poem must incite to a poem.

Because it is unalterably itself in its own language, a poem yields little of its genius to prose. Though there are styles (the Neo-classic, for instance) which appropriate the sinew and directness of prose, the two media are in essence different. The poem does not accept the routine and shorthand of experience set down in prose, thinned out in the mainly inert figures of daily speech; by constant definition the poem works against the grain of the ordinary. This creative insurgency is the very start of the poem; the poet seeks to scandalise our acceptances, to make new and rebellious. Thus even at its most spacious a prose paraphrase signifies a good deal less to a poem than does a piano transcription to an orchestral score.

CONSIDER THREE VERSIONS of a passage from Book VI of the *Iliad* (Glaukos' answer to Diomedes' war-challenge):

*Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the
ground;*

*Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those are passed away.
But if thou still persist to search my birth,
Then hear a tale that fills the spacious earth.*

(POPE)

*As is the generation of leaves, so is that of
humanity.*

*The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but
the live timber
burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring
returning.*

*So one generation of men will grow while another
dies.*

*Yet if you wish to learn all this and be certain
of my genealogy: there are plenty of men who
know it.*

(LATTIMORE)

Men in their generation are like the leaves of the trees. The wind blows and one year's leaves are scattered on the ground; but the trees burst into bud and put on fresh ones when the spring comes round. In the same way one generation flourishes and another nears its end. But if you wish to hear about my family, I will tell you the tale—most people know it already.

(RIEU)

Pope's is undoubtedly the most satisfactory of the three versions, for its discipline and alert pace; the fourth line illustrates how the energy of precise etymology—Pope's confident control of the Latinate *successive*—quickens our entire imaginative response, so that we very nearly experience a graphic action. But it is the best

version primarily because Pope's idiom is most fully committed to the fact that the *Iliad* is a poem, that its design and effect are poetic. For all its formulaic scruple, Richmond Lattimore's text is, at this particular point, far less persuasive; and this so exactly in the measure in which its looser syntax and vocabulary incline to the very different precisions or contractions of prose (*genealogy, there are plenty of men who know it*). E. V. Rieu's translation is by much the feeblest of the three. Inspired by the wish—at the time almost a social, expressly didactic motive—to make Homer widely popular, to present the *Iliad* as a timeless yarn, Rieu sacrificed poetic form to an agile, colloquial prose. But not altogether; Rieu's uneasiness about the enterprise leads, in the passage quoted, to the bits of interior rhyme (*ground/round, year's/nears*) and "fossil" cadences of blank verse, both damaging.

THE POINT is simply this: though always imperfect, a verse translation, in that it represents, re-enacts that selection of language, that stylisation or innovation of syntax inseparable from the nature of poetic composition, is more responsible to the intent, to the movement of spirit in the original than a downward transfer into prose can ever be.

This example makes a second point. Each time a poem is translated, initiating a new poem, the original finds new and active life in present sensibility. Translation gives to the metaphor of classic survival, of the unbroken forward-acting role of literature a solid reality. As it could in no other way, the Homeric epic, in the uninterrupted sequence of translations from Chapman and Hobbes to Robert Fitzgerald and Christopher Logue, is at work in English literature, is inwoven with the fabric of the language of the English and American poetic tradition. Verse re-presentations of Horace and Catullus are fully implicit in the development of English satire, of the English domestic lyric and love poem. Shakespearean translation is crucially a part of the late growth, of the coming to self-awareness, of German classic and romantic verse. The classic wanes to the status of the academic or falls silent unless it is re-appropriated by translation, unless the living poet examines and affirms its relevance to the current idiom (for want of vital translation Lucretius is, at present, inert).

But poetic translation is not only a living spark, a flow of energy between past and present and between cultures (immersion, so far as we may experience it, in another language being as close as we can come to a second self, to breaking free of the habitual skin or tortoise-

shell of our consciousness); poetic translation plays a unique role inside the translator's own speech. It drives inward. Anyone translating a poem, or attempting to, is brought face to face, as by no other exercise, with the genius, bone-structure and limitations of his native tongue. Because that tongue is our constant landscape, we almost grow oblivious to its horizon, we take it to be the only or privileged space of being. Translation taxes and thus makes inventory of our resources. It compels us to realise that there are raw materials we lack, stocks of feeling, instruments of expression, inlets to awareness which our own linguistic territory does not possess or has failed to exploit. This last recognition can be a powerful stimulus: witness Baudelaire's and Mallarmé's determination to import from Poe a brand of unreason and murky brilliance which they felt lacking in French, or Goethe's efforts to bend a European language towards the greater multiplicity of erotic nuance, of amorous-philosophic congruence which he had observed in oriental poetry. Poetic translation enriches by what it reveals of our poverties.

Its necessary failures, the fact that the original cannot be rendered exhaustively, that we cannot retrace the steps of the poet had he conceived the poem in our own language, are often uniquely positive. The inadequacies of a significant translation are creative of insight, critically revealing as no other reading of a poem is. To the poet who translates and to the reader who has access to both languages that is the justifying paradox. What remains uncommunicated after translation is not *the poem* or even its essential elements. Depending on the case, what fails to come across may be structures of spirit peculiar to the original language, networks of historical or phonetic association, a grid of immediate symbolic recognitions or idiomatic shorthand unrecapturable because they are so firmly localised in a specific cultural milieu, society, historical epoch remote from our own. No translation by a later poet (unless, perhaps, he is working from an African or aboriginal context) can simulate the collective, orally conceived resonance of Homeric formulae. Dante's difficulties and good fortune in composing, literally, a new vulgate, cannot be fully mirrored in any translation using a language already established and burdened with poetic precedent. The relative interchangeability of the parts of speech in a German sentence, of which Rilke makes a means of suspended motion and contrary definition, will not pass into French syntax.

BUT EACH OF THESE DEFEATS is creative. It penetrates and identifies the genius of the original;

it communicates that genius to us by what it fails to re-produce. A great poetic translation—Hölderlin's Sophokles, Valéry's restatement of Virgil's *Eclogues*, Robert Lowell's readings of Osip Mandelstam—is criticism in the highest sense. It surrounds the original with a zone of unmastered meaning, an area in which the original declares its own singular life.

My eyelash prickles—a tear boils up from my chest.

I'm not afraid. I know what's on the calendar—a storm.

Someone marvellous is hurrying me on to forget everything.

It's stuffy here. It's boring how much I want to live.

I lift my head at the first noise from the bunks.

I look around me wildly, half asleep.

I am like a convict singing his rough song.

When morning whitens the thin strip above his prison.

(Moscow, 1931)

It is the job of all genuine literary criticism to fall short, to make explicit by its own precisely honest inadequacy, the genius of that it focuses on. The piece of criticism accumulates whatever linguistic, historical, referential insights it can command and make relevant; but it must show in the process that this accumulation comes to less than the sum of the poem. What the poem says criticism cannot fully restate; criticism is most valid where it makes the margin of difference lucid, where it draws around the work of the poet a barrier of light.

The poetic translator does the same, but goes deeper because he takes larger risks. The circle he traces around the original illumines not only the text he is translating but his own art and person. In Roy Campbell's versions of Baudelaire we note a three-fold action and radical honesty: a re-presentment of Baudelaire's poems, a critical perception of the genius of those poems by virtue of what is incomplete in the translation, and a necessary disclosure of what may be facile or coarse-grained in Campbell's own idiom. The process of perceptive engagement is strictly comparable only to that which occurs when a composer sets a major poem, when Britten, for example, "translates" Blake or Rimbaud.

At its best, the peculiar synthesis of conflict and complicity between a poem and its translation into another poem creates the impression of a "third language," of a medium of communicative energy which somehow reconciles both languages in a tongue deeper, more comprehensive than either. In the no-man's land between du Bellay's *Heureux qui comme Ulysse* and Chesterton's English sonnet, so nearly exhaustive of the original, we seem to

hear "*encore l'immortelle parole*," Mallarmé's expression for the notion of a universal, immediate tongue from which English and French had broken off.

*Happy, who like Ulysses or that lord
Who raped the fleece, returning full and sage,
With usage and the world's wide reason stored,
With his own kin can wait the end of age.
When shall I see, when shall I see, God knows!
My little village smoke; or pass the door,
The old dear door of that unhappy house
That is to me a kingdom and much more?
Mightier to me the house my fathers made
Than your audacious heads, O Halls of Rome!
More than immortal marbles undecayed,
The thin sad slates that cover up my home;
More than your Tiber is my Loire to me,
Than Palatine my little Lyre there;
And more than all the winds of all the sea
The quiet kindness of the Angevin air.*

This experience of what the German critic Walter Benjamin termed a "lost totality," an underlying unison in the mystery of human speech, is the ideal towards which translation strives. It cannot be fulfilled.

Translations range from those which traduce to those which transfigure. Transfiguration, the version which surpasses the original as Baudelaire excels Poe, is perhaps the more lasting betrayal. But the attempt to translate must be made, the risks taken, if that tower in Babel is to be more than ruin. It has been made, with particular wealth and vigour, in the period from ca. 1870 to the present.

THE PERIOD from Rossetti to Robert Lowell has been an age of poetic translation rivalling that of the Tudor and Elizabethan masters. In range of linguistic response it has clearly surpassed the 16th century. Why should this be?

There is no single, obvious answer. A contrary force has been at work in the modern sensibility: a hunger for lineage, for informing tradition, and a simultaneous impulse to make all things new. Both currents would lead to the revaluation and "modernisation" of classic and medieval literature. There has also been a characteristic internationalisation of the poetic temper. We find in the work of Eliot, Pound, Apollinaire, Valéry, Rilke, Mayakovsky, Neruda, a shared logic of emotion, an agreed code of reference and symbolic device. Modern poets are alert to each other's performance; much modern verse is directly or by force of echo filled with cross-reference to other poetry, to other cultures. Poetic translation is the most open, deliberate mode of allusion.

The instability of contemporary norms, the

tendency to regard our morals and canons of taste as purely relative or provisional, has meant that alien cultures, alien conventions of feeling, exercise a peculiar fascination on the Western mind. The Javanese tone sequence in a Debussy score, the African mask in a Picasso, the translations of Hindi or Nigerian lyrics into English verse, embody a common appetite for renewal, for the revitalising shock, and a common guilt towards that which we have too long pillaged or scorned as mere colonisers.

There appear to be economic and sociological factors in the brilliance and profusion of modern poetic translation, particularly in America (Marianne Moore, Richmond Lattimore, Robert Lowell, Richard Wilbur, Robert Fitzgerald, William Arrowsmith). In American culture the desire for tradition, for precedent in the classic past, collides with a widespread ignorance of foreign languages and history. Few know Greek in Athens (Georgia) or Latin in Rome (Illinois). Yet the sentiment that Homer and Juvenal are part of the status of civilised consciousness remains genuine. It has found an influential economic and technological ally in the activities of the American university campus and in the hunger of the paperback. To keep the machines fed, paperback publishers have raided the past and the foreign (half a dozen versions of Homer in the last ten years). Like the BBC in England, American academic and commercial editors have directly commissioned much of the best of recent verse translation. Robert Fitzgerald's *Odyssey*, William Merwin's Spanish ballads, the versions of Greek drama by Arrowsmith and the Chicago group, were made possible by this new patronage and the mass-market of the campus book-store.

As important as all these reasons put together, however, and central to the manner and controversial liberties of the modern form, is the achievement of one man. If our age of poetic translation rivals that of Golding, Gavin Douglas, and Chapman, it is because of the teaching and example of Ezra Pound.

THE WHOLE OF Pound's writing may be seen as an act of translation, as the appropriation to an idiom radically his own of a fantastic rag-bag of languages, cultural legacies, historical echoes, stylistic models. He has been the master jackdaw in the museum and scrap-heap of civilisation, the courier between far places of the mind, the contriver of a chaotic patchwork of values which, on decisive occasion, and by some great gift of irascible love, fuse into a strange coherence. As A. Alvarez has said, Pound manages to write English verse as if Shakespeare had not written before him, a scandal and

liberation made possible by his raids on Provençal and French, on Latin and Chinese (be it off the silk-scroll or the tea-crate), on Whitman and Heine. Within this general plunder, Pound's actual translations play a vital part. They have altered the definition and ideals of verse translation in the 20th century as surely as Pound's poetry has renewed or subverted modern English and American poetics.

A first look at nearly any modern verse translation is enough to show whether it comes before or after the *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1917/1934). But the "making new" of translation had already occurred in *Personae* (1909) and *Provença* (1910). After "The River Merchant's Wife" (1915) the art of translation had entered its modern phase.

Pound's actual repertoire and range of enthusiasm were not as novel as might appear. The focus on the Greek lyrics, on Catullus, on Provençal and Tuscan poetry, on Villon, Baudelaire, and Verlaine, had already been defined by the Victorian translators, by Rossetti, Swinburne, Arthur Symonds, and Ernest Dowson. Arthur Waley, four years younger than Pound, was at work independently, shaping and exploiting a growing interest in Chinese and Japanese literature. Indeed, so far as actual range goes, the modern canon was essentially set down by the translators of the 1880s and 1890s. What they neglected or thought irrelevant—Lucretius, Tibullus, Latin poetry of the renaissance and baroque, the French neoclassics, the poetry of Goethe and Schiller—has not yet moved into the light. New renderings of Villon continue incessant when there are, as yet, hardly any of Maurice Scève, for instance, or Vigny. Pound broadened and gave critical orthodoxy to a body of values and emotional responses established by his pre-Raphaelite and Edwardian predecessors. What he revolutionised was the idiom of translation, the notion of what a translation is and of how it relates to the original.

Marianne Moore has summarised this revolution with her customary abruptness: "the natural order of words, subject, predicate, object; the active voice where possible; a ban on dead words, rhymes synonymous with gusto." These precepts stand for a whole vision of active re-statement. Pound's translations of Rihaku (Li Po), Andreas Divus, Laforgue, Sophocles, are re-enactments of the original poetic deed in the cadence, tonality, idiomatic stress of the modern. The translation exacts from the original the utmost of felt relevance; it carries to extreme Kierkegaard's dictum "It is not worth while remembering that past which cannot become a present." In Pound's mimesis, Propertius and Cavalcanti "become a present"

so immediate to the ways we experience language and objectify emotion that the Latin or Provençal poem are inseparable from the grammar of modernity. Pound's impact reaches far beyond the texts he himself has rendered; thus Ronald Knox's re-creation of the "Lamentations of Jeremias" plainly reflects the rhythm and tone-colour of "The Seafarer."

BUT ARE THESE "translations" by Pound and his numerous successors—Marianne Moore, Robert Lowell, Christopher Logue—translations in any proper sense? Or are they what Dryden, following on Ben Jonson, terms *imitation*, "where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the ground-work, as he pleases"? A practice, adds Dryden, that is "the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead."

The quarrel over Pound's *Propertius* goes on (with recent argument suggesting that Pound's scholarship was not as hollow as professional Latinists would have it). Arrowsmith's treatment of Aristophanes and Robert Lowell's *Imitations* of Baudelaire or Pasternak pose it anew. It is, in part, a quarrel over semantics; the fact of radical change is no longer in doubt. The contemporary translator and even reader of classic verse comes after Pound as the modern painter comes after Cubism. Inevitably much of contemporary translation implies and was made possible by Pound's enlargement of the term. Thus I take translation to include the writing of a poem in which a poem in another language (or in an earlier form of one's own language) is the vitalising, shaping presence; a poem which can be read and responded to independently but which is not ontologically complete, a previous poem being its occasion, begetter, and in the literal sense, *raison d'être*.

THIS IS the definition implicit in the modern movement, in the extraordinary wealth and energy of verse translation, representation, imitation from Rossetti to George MacBeth. It cannot be rigorous; there are border-line cases which poet and reader play by ear. One would include Christopher Logue's ferocious re-statements of the *Iliad*—in which every modern line seems to me explicitly directed towards Homer's survivance, towards the presentment and "presentness" of his songs.

*But they had gone.
Rolling across the plain together*

*Like an arrowhead from a kneeling bowshot. . . .
Hector, leaning over the horses
As if the chariot was fastened to his belly,
As if his eyes, not horses, drew the Trojans in
Towards the boiling spiral.
War.*

*Dust like red mist.
Pain like chalk on slate. Heat like Arctic.
The light withdrawn from Sarpedon's body.
The enemies swirling over it.
Bronze flak.
Man against man; banner behind slatted
banner;
The torn gold overwhelming the faded blue,
Blue overcoming gold, both up again, both
frayed
By arrows that drift like bees, thicker than
autumn rain.
The left horse falls. The right prances through
blades,
Tearing its belly like a silk balloon,
And the shields inch forward under bowshots,
And under the shields the half-lost soldiers think,
"We fight when the sun rises. When it sets we
count the dead.
What has the beauty of Helen to do with us?"
Half-lost,
With the ochre mist swirling around their knees
They shuffle forward, lost, until the shields clash
—AOI!
Lines of black ovals eight feet high, clash
—AOI!
And in the half-light who will be first to hesitate,
Or, wavering, draw back, and, Yes! . . . the slow
Wavering begins and, Yes! . . . they bend away
from us
As the spears flicker between the black hides,
The bronze glows vaguely, and the bones show
Like pink drumsticks.*

One would exclude Auden's "Shield of Achilles" which is a commentary on, a critique from without of Homeric motifs. But the distinction can never be absolute.

Each poem in a book of modern verse translation should have the original on the facing page. A prose paraphrase, perhaps bracketing the principal difficulties, should fill the margin as in a polyglot Bible. This is the only completely honest format for a reader and user of poetic translation. Obvious, though none the less obstructive reasons of size, economy, "general appeal" often make this impossible. But any anthology would defeat itself if it did not, in whatever languages are accessible to him, return the reader to the original; if it did not direct him from the living mirror, however luminous, to the primary object. To translate means to carry over from what has been silent to what is alive, from the distant to the near. But also to carry back.

Stanley Moss

God Poem

I

Especially he loves
His space and the parochial darkness.
They are his family, from them grow his kind:
Idols with many arms and suns that fathered
The earth, among his many mirrors, and some
That do not break:
Rain kept sacred by faithful summer grasses,
Fat Buddha and lean Christ, bull and ram,
Horns thrusting up his temple and cathedral;
Mirrors—but he is beyond such vanities.
Easy to outlive
The moment's death having him on your knees;
Grunting and warm he prefers wild positions:
He mouths the moon and sun, brings his body
Into insects that receive him beneath stone,
Into fish that leap as he chases,
Or silent stones that receive his silence.
Chivalrous and polite the dead take
His caress, and the sea rolling under him
Takes his fish as payment and his heaps of shells.

II

As he will,
He throws the wind arch-backed on the highway,
Lures the cat into moonlit alleys,
Mountains and fields with wild strawberries.
He is animal,
His tail drags uncomfortably, he trifles
With the suck of bees and lovers, so simple
With commonplace tongues; his eyes ripple
Melancholy iron and carefree tin,
His thighs are raw from rubbing, cruel as pine,
He can wing an eagle off a hare's spine,
Crouch with the Sphinx, push bishops down
In chilly chapels, a wafer in their mouths;
Old men cry out his passage through their bowels.

III

No word, none of these, no name, "Red Worm! Snake!"
What name makes him leave his hiding place?
Out of the null and void,
No name and no meaning: God, Jahweh, the Lord,
Not to be spoken to, he never said a word
Or took the power of death: the inconspicuous
Plunge from air into sea he gave to us,
Winds that wear away our towns. . . . Who breathes
Comes to nothing: absence, a world.

NOTES & TOPICS

“*E pur si muove*”

A PRESIDENT FRIEND said thirty years ago “God help the Church of England if the Church of Rome ever learns good manners.” There is a more important question, though, than whether God needs to help the Church of England. What should we do about the Church of Rome were she not merely to learn good manners, but to become genuinely *acceuillante*, affectionate, human, even humble?

Of course we could discuss the appearance as illusory. But it is hard to do so when you have come to know, perhaps even shared imprisonment with, some of those who express this new mood; or, since not many have the opportunity to do this, when you have read some of the books that are its product. For instance, Father Leeming’s new book.¹ Quite apart from its content, what is striking is its tone: one of warmth, of patient understanding of other Christian traditions, of a total absence of the old spirit of proselytism. This is being recognised in unlikely places. Fr. Leeming quotes a letter from a prominent Pentecostalist leader, Dr. David J. du Plessis, of April 1965:

Remembering how bitter my heart used to be against R.C.s, and how prejudiced I was against anything tainted with Catholicism, I am not surprised at the scepticism of Protestant and Pentecostal people regarding the phenomenal change that is taking place in the R.C. Church round the world....

The Holy Spirit is certainly moving upon Roman Catholic flesh. They are reading the Bible and they are showing a real regard for others. If you find it hard to trust them, then remember how hard it must have been for the Christians in Jerusalem to trust Saul of Tarsus. ... But nevertheless, he was God’s chosen man.

Protestants of this persuasion have felt called

THIS is the second in a series of comments on the recent Vatican Council. The first (“The Pathos of Vatican II,” *ENCOUNTER*, December 1965) was by a prominent Catholic theologian, Dom Aelred Graham. Father Martin Jarrett-Kerr is a member of the Order of the Community of the Resurrection and the author of *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence* (1961) and *Secular Promise* (1964). We shall be publishing next month a third comment by Mr. Paul Blanshard.

to work for the “conversion” of Roman Catholics; they have not usually imagined this process possible while the persons remained Roman Catholics.

Instead of dismissing the *aggiornamento* in Rome as illusory, which is difficult in face of the facts, another reaction is to describe it as genuine but a last fling, an ingathering of the dwindling majority, a Christian Popular Front movement born by opportunism out of encirclement. Thus *Pravda* said of Vatican II,

No matter what decisions are taken by the Council it is clear that the Catholic Church is on the decline. The Vatican of our days represents a living corpse and nothing can resurrect it.

This confident prediction, however, does not square very well with the suggestions in other Marxist circles that some kind of co-existence with Catholicism is now called for in view of the increasing co-operation in some countries between lay Catholics (and even priests) and movements for social progress.

ONE OF THE OBSERVERS at the Council, the American Quaker, Professor D. V. Steere said, in a broadcast in this country, that put at the lowest estimation the Council represented “the biggest experiment in adult education the world has ever seen.” Some 2,000 bishops, Religious Superiors, *et al.*, met for several months during each year of the Council along with their *periti* (theological experts) to learn about new trends, not only in theology but in society, which normally as ecclesiastical administrators they have little leisure to study. Indeed, most of them were meeting each other for the first time; and the impression we get of initial fumbling at the Council was largely due to this inexperience. Mr. George Bull² quotes a revealing study which shows that 20 of a given 39 national or regional episcopal conferences used only to meet once a year, some only once in two or more years, and that the Italian bishops had never met before as a complete body of bishops. What is most striking about the steady advance of the “progressives” is that the cards were initially stacked so heavily against them: they had no organisation and at first no cohesion. As Mr. Bull puts it, before the Council they were used

to a direct relationship with Rome rather than to horizontal combinations.... For the most part they emerged as recognisable and influential leaders of progressive opinion... only as the Council proceeded, often in reactions to events:

¹ Bernard Leeming, S.J. *The Vatican Council and Christian Unity*. Darton Longman & Todd, 42s.

² George Bull. *Vatican Politics* (Chatham House Essays). Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d. This is a valuable, impartial study of the Council.

thus during the first session the main challenge to the conservatives came from a fairly small group of mostly European cardinals; then from several of the missionary bishops; and with real determination from some of the Americans only during the second and third sessions. . . . They lacked the physical basis for a formal organisation—other than the telephone, often used in a hurry.

The crucial moment for the whole course of the Council came when Cardinal Liénart of Lille and Cardinal Frings of Cologne protested against the lists prepared beforehand for the Commissions, with members of the Curia at the head of each. Instead, the bishops demanded to meet in national and regional groups to discuss nominations. From that moment the attempt at Curial domination of the Council was doomed. It certainly took everyone by surprise. Indeed, John XXIII's developing attitudes took everyone by surprise. As late as 1962 he had issued the encyclical, *Veterum Sapientia*, containing, along with other instructions on the use of Latin in the Church, a solemn warning to bishops to forbid any within their jurisdiction to write against the use of Latin in the liturgy. He had attacked Communism and the *communisant* tendencies among some Catholics—"those alignments, those dangerous and wicked compromises with ideologies and social structures which are . . . the contradiction of that human and social order which Christianity brought into the world."³ He had been responsible for creating 54 cardinals (more than the number that elected him Pope); more than half were curialists. Yet contrary to all likely predictions, he not only called the Council (an improbable gamble), he opened it with a courageous rebuke of the "prophets of woe" who feared change and thought everything in our day was going from bad to worse. And he grew in this kind of openness as time went on, till he was able to produce the remarkable encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*—remarkable not least for the fact that a UNO conference was held on it at which a Marxist speaker from Eastern Europe found much to praise in the document, and Pietro Nenni (head of the Italian left-wing party once as good as proscribed by the Vatican) travelled with the papal blessing to expound it. In planning this encyclical John had, apparently, had it in mind to

start from propositions about the human person which no one could reject, and so illuminate the

broad and open character of the concept of peace. . . . "If you first talk about their rights," he said, "they may listen when you begin to talk about their duties."

BUT WHAT WAS MOST remarkable about the Council as it developed was its openness to "the other"—i.e., the "Separated Brethren." The contrast between the "Instruction" on the Ecumenical Movement from the Holy Office in 1949, in which the stress was on helping people to "return to the Church" (and on protecting the faithful from the dangers of ecumenism) and the place of the Observers at the Council, together with the work of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, cannot be exaggerated. Fr. Leeming points out that in the Decree on Ecumenism the language of "return to the Church" was carefully avoided in favour of the "re-integration of Christian unity—there need be no 'surrender,' 'capitulation,' 'submission,' or 'absorption.' . . ." Indeed, Mr. Bull puts it that "Vatican II has seen the taking back into Catholicism of many attitudes and ideas which because of their association with Protestantism were shunned by the Church for centuries. . . . The influence of Protestant theologians on the work of modern Catholic theology has been substantial." It is in this context that Paul VI's moving expression of corporate penitence, at the opening of the Second Session, is to be taken:

If we are in any way to blame for that separation [which divides Christians] we humbly beg God's forgiveness. And we ask pardon too of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us. . . .

Thus only was it possible to achieve, after some of the hardest battles in the Council, the "Declaration on Human Freedom." The standard view that "error has no rights"—or, more subtly put by a Canonist, that "civil toleration in a Catholic state has no reason except the avoidance of greater evils and is to be measured precisely by the degree of its necessity. When and if a lesser extent of tolerance suffices, i.e. a more restricted degree of liberty, only this and nothing more can or should be conceded" (Fr. Capello, 1954)—this view seemed so firmly fixed that it is perhaps the greatest revolution of all to have reversed it.

THE QUESTION WILL NO DOUBT be asked: will it last? For certainly there were less happy products of the Council. There was, notoriously, the hastily produced "Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication," with its ominous injunctions:

Laymen who have a role in using these instruments [radio, journalism, the theatre, etc.] should be busy giving witness to Christ, especially

³ W. A. Purdy. *The Church on the Move*. Hollis & Carter, 35s. Fr. Purdy's book is a well-informed attempt to trace something of a continuity between the policies of Pope Pius XII and John XXIII. I think the most he can do is to uncover similarities at somewhat banal levels.

by performing their duties skilfully and with apostolic ardour. In their own way, let them also lend direct aid to the pastoral action of the Church through their technical, economic, cultural and artistic abilities. . . .⁴

Perhaps less easily detectable, though equally questionable, were some of the assumptions behind the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity." This was, we gather, an improvement on the original drafts and at least it recognises that laymen "should co-operate in a brotherly spirit with other Christians, with non-Christians, and with members of international organisations." But the general impression is still of a Western-centred Church sending out "missionaries." This is borne out by the comparative figures: of the 392,400 priests (R.C.) in the world only 33,000 work in predominantly non-Christian countries—i.e. 359,000 priests for 510 million Catholics, and 33,000 priests for 1,900 million non-Christians. Catholic laymen, too, have complained that the Council dodged some of the really crucial questions: on nuclear deterrence and the right of conscientious objection to war. As one of them put it to me: "The Council's results are disappointing. They've merely tidied up the sacristy. We Catholic laymen aren't all that interested in the vernacular. What we want is the pill. . . ." Indeed, for all the polite things said in the Decrees about "the place of the laity" the Council still gives the impression that what laymen are really expected to do (in the words of an American bishop) is to "believe, pray, obey, and pay." The theologically informed and independent-minded layman is, deep down, regarded as something of a menace. Yet the time is later than many of the bishops think. In a "Pan-African Conference on Catholic Education" held last year in Leopoldville, which was preponderantly lay, the laymen seemed to know what they were doing and where they were going but the clergy were divided. The traditional attitudes, both European and African, were consistently on the losing side; and the Conference not only urged the replacement of priests by laymen in educational administration, but asserted that "Catholic education is a service to Africa, not a service to the Catholic Church." It is here, clearly, that the greatest challenge to the "conservative" minority in the Council will come, and (one hopes) block any post-Council attempts to return to the *status quo ante*—here, rather than

in "Collegiality," i.e. the "Synod" of Bishops. Yet we should be thankful for even this alternative to Curial domination. For here too there can be encouraging surprises.

During the Third Session of the Council, it was reported, a meeting of forty-five Spanish bishops ended with forty of their number leaving the room banging the door after them. It was widely assumed that the forty were the opponents of the Declaration on Religious Liberty and the remaining rump its only supporters. Accurate information subsequently corrected this impression. The reverse was true. . . .

Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R.

Brecht's "Twists & Turns"

THE MULTI-VOLUME EDITION of Brecht's works issued by his West German publisher, Suhrkamp, pursues its somewhat tortuous course. After the inadequate edition of the Poems (originally announced as planned to extend to six volumes, but now, under a howl of protests about the omissions and inadequately edited texts, already grown to nine, soon to be completed in *ten* volumes), after the somewhat less inadequate, but also considerably blemished, edition of the theoretical writings on Drama in seven volumes, we have now been given an edition of the *Prose Works* in five volumes. Here, too, one's joy is somewhat diminished by the realisation that the edition is very far from complete: one of the novels Brecht most frequently mentions in his correspondence, the so-called *Tui-Novel*, does not make an appearance here: it is a novel, in "*chinoiserie*," about the attitude of the intellectuals to a social revolution. On the other hand, this edition (which is confined to *narrative* prose) does assemble a very good collection of Brecht's short stories which contains some fascinating material from his early years. Above all, in the fifth and last volume, we are presented with a hitherto totally unknown work of the greatest interest: not so much as a work of fiction (which it can barely pretend to be) but as a fascinating fragment of Brecht's autobiography, a political, and, to some extent, personal self-portrait. This book has the title *Me-ti: Buch der Wendungen*, which one might translate as *Me-ti's Book of Twists and Turns*.

Here, again, Brecht has resorted to what was perhaps his favourite alienation effect: the *Chinese* setting. In the 1920s, Brecht's most

⁴The texts of the Council Decrees are given in English, in a handy volume, *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. M. Abbott, S.J., G. Chapman I.t.d. (10s. 6d.) with notes and comments by non-Roman Catholics.

formative years, there was a great vogue for Chinese classics in Germany. The great Sino-logist Richard Wilhelm published a whole series of volumes, finely bound in black and yellow cloth, ranging from Lao Tzu to Confucius. It also included the famous *I-Ching*, the *Book of Changes* which is basically a handbook of oracles enabling the user to predict the future from the way in which a number of shorter and longer sticks fall when thrown at random.

The *Me-ti* of the title, the imagined author of Brecht's book, is clearly derived from the philosopher Mo-ti, whose works were also published in Germany in the '20s. And the title itself is equally clearly a paraphrase—and parody—of the *Book of Changes* (*Wandlungen*) to "*tactical twists and turns*" (*Wendungen*). For here Brecht has left us a record of his attitude to Marxism and the Communist party from 1934–1956, the years during which, according to the editor, Uwe Johnson, he worked on the short anecdotes and aphorisms which make up the book.

Formally these short pieces are very similar to the short anecdotes of the *Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner* (Keuner Stories) which Brecht published in groups from the 1930s onward. That Keuner, the sceptical moralist who is the hero of these anecdotes, was a self-portrait of Brecht has always been evident to anyone familiar with Brecht's own attitudes. Yet, as Herr Keuner often expressed views not entirely in accordance with official East German party orthodoxy, those like myself who made the point were furiously attacked from those quarters for attributing the views of a fictional character to its author. Now Brecht himself furnishes the proof for the correctness of the identification Keuner-Brecht. At the outset of the new book we find a key to the names mentioned in the *Book of Twists and Turns*, from which we learn that Ka-meh, for example, equals Karl Marx; Mi-en-leh—Lenin; Ni-en—Stalin; Su—the Soviet Union; Hitler—Hi-jeh, Hui-jeh (*cf.* the title Arturo Ui), or Ti-hi; and Brecht—Kin, Kin-jeh, Kien-leh (all these are forms of the name Keuner; and in fact in more than one of the anecdotes Brecht has not yet changed Keuner consistently to Kin-jeh or Kin, leaving the two names side by side).

THE BULK OF THE book's two hundred pages is taken up by Brecht's attempts to grapple with the problem which Stalinism undoubtedly presented to a man who had come to Communism above all as a pacifist and a somewhat anarchic believer in every kind of freedom, sexual, political, economic and spiritual. It is touching to see Brecht's often almost pathetic efforts to

persuade himself that Stalin's terror was necessary:

After the forge-masters had been driven out, Mi-en-leh's association was violently attacked by many people, because there was not enough freedom in Su. And in fact the association everywhere, and for a long time, continued to oppress the followers of the forge-masters and also certain strata of wealthy peasants; and in order to be able to do this the association required an iron discipline among its members, so that great lack of freedom appeared to be prevalent even within the ranks of the association. Me-ti turned against all those who bewailed this lack of freedom in Su. . . .

Me-ti's arguments follow the familiar line that economic freedom is more important than political freedom:

... They (*i.e.* the members of the association) know that they, unlike the forge-masters and landowners, cannot be economically free as individuals but only in their collective totality. They have therefore organised their own liberation, and thus compulsion has arisen. Against all currents of thought, which threaten the production of goods for all, compulsion is used. It is against this compulsion that the clamour of those arises who want to be free from the point of view of organisation, and who are mostly free economically; they protest against this compulsion as though it resembled the Emperor's compulsion. They have not understood that the liberation is an economic task, a task that has to be organised.

Even more pitiful are Brecht's attempts to justify the Soviet forced labour camps:

In the country of Tsen inequality has been abolished, the oppression of man by man has been made as difficult as possible. Yet there still exist some anti-social elements. They are being treated in a very peculiar manner. So as to make it impossible for them to cause further damage by individual action, they are being isolated for a time. In former times this was done by locking them into special buildings, nowadays this isolation is accomplished by a restrained behaviour of all socially-minded people against them. They are condemned to improve the social institutions of the country. Those against whom a law case has become necessary are turned into people conducting a law case. They have to find the reasons for their transgression, and, if someone was guilty of causing them, to accuse him in public. They conduct law-suits against their own teachers as well as against people who are responsible for certain social institutions. When they have either succeeded in bringing about changes or when their proposals have been proved impracticable, the period of their compulsory labour is deemed completed. In the latter case they are most frequently ordered to those activities which they have criticised. The wicked are made better, said Me-ti, by allowing them to make improvements.

This text is as confused and illogical in the original as it appears in the translation. If the

period during which Brecht composed the book really started in 1934 (as is claimed by the editor, and there is no reason whatever to doubt his word), then this passage must have been written at a period when the idealistic projects for the abolition of prisons and their substitution by schools and debating societies had already long been abandoned in the Soviet Union. What we have here is therefore a strenuous effort on Brecht's part to persuade himself that the forced labour camps (and he *does* equate the activity of social enquiry to which his anti-social elements are condemned with *forced labour*) still somehow belonged to the world of those utopian dreams about the re-education of criminals.

BRECHT, of course, could not but be a little disturbed by the Byzantine adulation of Stalin. Yet here, too, he tried to persuade himself that it was necessary.

Me-ti said: Ni-en's reputation is obscured by bad kinds of praise. There is so much incense, that one no longer sees the picture and that one says: here is something which is being concealed. This kind of praise tastes of bribery. It is true however: when praise is necessary, we must get it from whatever quarter it can be got. To make them praise a good cause, bad people must be bribed. And at that time much praise was needed; for the path was obscure and the leader had no proofs. Hungry people who had never before seen a seed germinate were asked to sow. They were bound to believe that they were being forced to throw their corn away by the handful and to hide their potatoes underground.

Or again:

The adoration of Ni-en frequently assumed forms which amounted to a defamation of the man to be adored. Me-ti did not particularly worry about this. He said: Ni-en is building the great project. That is a very daring undertaking, never tried anywhere else. It needs great confidence on the part of the people. Ni-en knows how to get this. Through what else if not through production are people to become more intelligent and more self-reliant? Surely not by indoctrination alone?

It all comes down to the basic question whether Marxism itself represents an objective, scientific truth: "Me-ti was asked: How can you ask anyone to be at the same time objective and partisan? Me-ti replied: If the party is objectively right, there is no longer any distinction between the objective and the partisan." And yet it is clear that Brecht could not quite persuade himself by these strenuous arguments. "In a well-ordered state there is no need to talk continually of the individual's duty towards the state," he says in one of his aphorisms. And in the later portions of the *Book of Twists and Turns* the

critical note becomes considerably harsher. There is a very open criticism of the Stalin constitution, for example:

Me-ti turned against those who attacked the fact that the Constitution of Su was linked with the name of Ni-en. He said: it is indeed a constitution for which he who has written it must assume the responsibility. The progressive people of the whole world are split into two camps. One side believes that in Su the *great order* reigns, the others that it does not. These opinions are both right and wrong. Some important features of the *great order* have been established in their foundations and are being developed. Individual ownership of the tools of work is abolished, and because the land itself is regarded as such a tool of work and the individual ownership of land is abolished, the distinction between town and country is disappearing... But the new system, the most progressive in history, still works very badly and not very organically and needs so much effort and use of violence that the freedoms of individuals are very limited. As the system is being imposed by small groups of men, there is compulsion everywhere and no real rule of the people. The lack of freedom of opinion, freedom of coalition, lip-service to authority and the acts of violence of the magistrates prove that all the basic elements of the *great order* are far from realised as yet, are far from being developed at the moment.

The great Moscow "Confessions" of the '30s also clearly shook Brecht's faith, although in public he seemed to support even the show trials enthusiastically. This, evidently, is how he really felt about them:

Me-ti criticised Ni-en because in his law-suits against his enemies he demanded too much confidence from the people. He said: If I am asked to believe something which can be proved (without furnishing the proof) this is tantamount to my being asked to believe something which *cannot* be proved. I shall not believe it. Ni-en may have benefited the people by removing his enemies from the association, but he has not proved his point. By conducting a trial without proofs he has harmed the people. He should have taught the people to demand proof, and in particular from himself, who in general has been of so much service.

AMONG THE NAMES in the key at the beginning of the book it is also interesting to find, in the guise of Ko the philosopher, Brecht's old friend and mentor, the Marxist theoretician Karl Korsch, who had been expelled from the Communist party long before Hitler came to power. In a passage of some length Brecht gives a very interesting summary of Korsch's criticisms of Soviet policy:

According to Ko's view the struggle between the pupils of Mi-en-leh who had fallen out (Ni-en

and To-tsi [*i.e.* Trotsky]) showed that Mi-en-leh's principles had been used up. Neither their actual application through Ni-en, nor their application proposed by To-tsi could bring a decisive success. According to Ko, To-tsi merely proposed certain rather doubtful reforms of the apparatus of power, which had begun to form the real obstacle to progress. The principles put forward by Ko showed a clear weakness at the very points where Mi-en-leh's principles had their strength, but he excellently pointed out the weaknesses of Mi-en-leh's principles, whom, in contrast to his pupils, he always treated with the highest respect.

Even more bitter than these criticisms of the developments within the Soviet Union, are the strictures Brecht levels against the tyranny exercised by the Soviet party against Communist parties outside Russia:

Under Ni-en's leadership industry in Su was built up without exploiters and agriculture collectively conducted and supplied with machinery. But the associations outside Su degenerated. It was no longer the members who elected the secretaries but the secretaries who elected the members. The policies were dictated by Su, and the secretaries paid by Su. If mistakes were made, those were punished who had criticised them; but those who had made the mistakes remained in office. Soon they were no longer the best, merely the most pliable. . . . Those who issued the orders in Su itself were no longer informed, because the secretaries did no longer report anything that might not be welcome news for them. Confronted with these conditions the best were in despair. Me-ti deplored the decline of the *great method* [*i.e.* Marxism]. Master Ko turned away from it. To-tsi denied all progress in Su, even the most obvious. Those who fought against Ni-en's influence on the associations outside Su soon realised they were alone; those who fought against him inside Su saw themselves ringed round by criminals and eventually committed crimes against the people themselves. In Su all wisdom was concentrated on economic construction, and banished from politics. Outside Su all those who praised Ni-en's merits, even those that were undeniable, made themselves suspect of being bribed; in Su any one became suspect of treason who disclosed Ni-en's mistakes, even those under which Ni-en himself suffered most.

These are strong words indeed. They suggest what really went on in the minds of sincere supporters of the party at the height of the Stalinist terror. And surely they confirm the views of those who have maintained that Brecht's outward loyalty to the party line in fact concealed a painful struggle with his own conscience. His public acceptance of the official line thus appears the outcome of a tragic, and in some ways heroic, inner conflict. Having committed himself, he did not want to become "a renegade," even one like Korsch (whom he

greatly revered and admired) who remained a Marxist but openly attacked the post-Stalinist line and even questioned some of Lenin's conclusions. And yet Brecht had no illusions about the quality of the leadership of the party: "To break off discussion in a situation of urgency, to demand obedience instead of enthusiasm, to confound the need for speedy action with haste, to purloin responsibility: these are the hallmarks of bad leadership."

THE APHORISMS and anecdotes of the *Book of Twists and Turns* not only reveal a great deal of Brecht's political heartsearchings, they also provide some very illuminating insights into his personal attitudes, as embodied in the poet Kin or Kin-jeh.

The poet Kin said:

How am I to write immortal works when I am not famous?

How am I to answer when I am not asked?

Why should I lose time over writing verse, if time itself loses those verses?

I write my proposals in a durable kind of language

Because I am afraid it will take long till they are implemented.

To achieve great things, great changes are needed.

Little changes are the enemies of great changes.

I have enemies. Therefore I must be famous.

This is Brecht's definition of poetry itself—a *durable* language which will preserve the blueprint of action. And beyond that: this durable language should contain the power to evoke action directly, it should be *gestisch*, gestural.

Me-ti said: The poet Kin-jeh can claim to have renewed the language of literature. When he appeared upon the scene two main modes of language prevailed: a stylised mode which sounded stilted and written and was never actually spoken by the people as they went about their business or at other occasions; and a mode which could be heard spoken everywhere, which was a mere imitation of everyday speech and was not stylised at all. He used a mode of speech which was natural and stylised at the same time. He achieved this by observing the attitudes which underlay each sentence. His sentences always embodied attitudes and he always allowed the attitude to shine through the sentences. Such a language he called gestural, because it was no more than an expression of men's gestures. His sentences are best read if the reader accompanies his reading by certain bodily movements that fit in with them, movements which signify politeness or anger or the desire to persuade, or mockery or trying to remember something or taking someone by surprise or warning someone or inspiring fear. . . . The poet Kin recognised language as a tool of action and knew that one is speaking to others even at moments when one is speaking to oneself.

THE MOST REMARKABLE FEATURE of the *Book of Twists and Turns*, however, is the fact that here, in the guise of its thinly applied veneer of *chinoiserie* Brecht seems to have been able to speak about one of the great loves of his life. The almost total absence of love poetry addressed to any of the women with whom he had relations of varying intensity in the course of his career has often been noted. Here one of these women does make an appearance under the name of Lai-tu. No clue is given to her identity in the key to Chinese names that opens the book, yet for anyone familiar with Brecht's life she is easily enough identified.

The poet Kin-jeh said: It is difficult to say what Lai-tu produced. Perhaps it is those twenty-two lines about the countryside which I included in my play and which might never have been written without her. Of course, we never talked about the countryside. What she found amusing has also influenced me. It is not what other people find amusing. And of course I may also have used the way she moves in the structure of my poetry. She does a lot of other things as well, but even if she had only produced what made me produce, and allowed me to produce, she would have been worth while. (Kin-jeh did not suffer from undue modesty).

For Brecht erotic attachments and politics often merged. He called a common political commitment among lovers the *third thing* which built a bridge between two human beings. (There is a song about the third thing in *The Mother* where the common struggle against the exploiters is seen as the basis of the true friendship between Mother and Son.) But this doctrine of the third thing does not always seem to have worked as Brecht would have wanted it:

Lai-tu had a husband and they lived badly together because she did not enjoy sleeping with him, and, apart from some sympathy, there was nothing to bind her to him. She profited from Me-ti's doctrine concerning the third thing by suggesting to her husband that he should work for the oppressed people for whom she herself was working. Her husband agreed and Lai-tu continued sleeping with him. Me-ti chided her for this and said: What point is there in finding a third thing which unites you and to keep up another third thing which disunites you? It amounts to getting a piece of bread and washing it down with a draught of poison.

In spite of the Chinese setting, it is clearly stated at one point that Lai-tu went to Spain to report on the civil war there.

Kin-jeh's sister went to the front to make a report on the civil war. For a long time he was without news of her and could not write to her. He made the following song:

*Our incessant conversation, which resembles
The conversation of two poplar trees, our con-
versation of many years
Has ceased. I no longer hear
What you say or write, nor do you hear
What I am saying.
I held you on my lap and combed your hair
I taught you the rules of warfare
I instructed you how to treat a man
How to read books and faces
How to struggle and how to rest
But now I see
How much I have not told you.
Often at night I get up, and in my throat
I am choking from useless advice.*

But such tenderness and concern were most unusual for Brecht who loved to appear unconcerned, nonchalant, and tough. Hence: "After that period when his sister had been far away from him in the civil war, Kin-jeh always classed himself, because of his anxiety for her, among the cowards." For: "Kin-jeh strove to keep his equanimity, Lai-tu tried to shake him out of it. 'Is equanimity compatible with love?' asked Lai-tu. Kin-jeh replied: 'Yes'..."

In spite (or *because*) of the poet's striving for detachment, it was a stormy love affair.

Kin-jeh said to Me-ti: Lai-tu the selfless one has come with a basket and fetched away the gifts she gave me. She is telling my enemies that I am stealing from my collaborators. She is out of her mind. What am I to do? Me-ti said: She must be demented, if she acts like that, for she loves you. She is demanding too much, because she has given too much; she is heaping calumny on you because she has praised you too highly. See to it that no harm comes to her and that she has enough to eat. As she loves you, she will permit you to do that.

AND SO, FROM ANECDOTES AND APHORISMS, we get a most vivid picture of that fascinating and contradictory personality, the totalitarian democrat, the tender tough, the opportunistic idealist: Bertolt Brecht.

To earn one's supper, one needs intelligence; it may consist in being obedient to one's superiors. Intelligence of a different kind may induce one to strive to abolish the whole system of superiors and inferiors. Yet even for that enterprise one may still need intelligence of the first sort; for in order to be able to bring that great enterprise to a successful conclusion one still has to eat supper.

This is the paradox of the political poet, the committed artist in our time—that all his choices are choices of evils. Brecht's Me-ti and his *Book of Twists and Turns* are a veritable catechism of these dilemmas.

Martin Esslin

BOOKS & WRITERS

The Dance of the Long-Legged Fly

On Tom Wolfe's Poise — By RICHARD HOGGART

MR. WOLFE appeals so widely and powerfully not just because he is fascinated by the phenomena he describes; so are many other reporters of "the contemporary scene." He appeals not simply because he occasionally jumps outside the massive detail and makes a sharp critical remark about it; many others are more sustainedly and effectively critical. Nor does he appeal chiefly because he has considerable verbal talent, though that goes a long way towards explaining the immediacy of his appeal and his great "readability." The real cause of his enormous success is his poise.

Almost all these essays¹ are in fact about not poise itself but the search for poise today, chiefly among young people. Mr. Wolfe calls it "style" or more often, "form." The kinds of teen-ager he writes about are "absolutely maniacal about form," "serious as always about form." To have realised this is Wolfe's main insight, the thread which holds most of his essays together and gives them their overall energy. It is not, of course, a new insight and others have probed it more penetratingly.

A recent paper by Marshall McLuhan, delivered to a conference called *Vision 65* at Southern Illinois University last October and not yet published in Britain, gives a useful pointer. Young people today, says McLuhan, are "data processors" on a very large scale. They have to work very hard and constantly at (a) processing all the fluid data (offered attitudes and styles) which their technological, electronic, mass-communication, consumers' society throws at them, and (b) matching that against the more ordered, classified, scheduled outlook which the classroom, the older, established environment, offers. So they become bewildered,

baffled because of this extraordinary gap between

these two worlds.... To grow up is to be absurd [McLuhan is explicitly echoing Paul Goodman here] because we live in two worlds, and neither one of them inclines us to grow up. Our youngsters today are mainly confronted with the problem of just growing up—that is our new work—and it is total. That is why it is not a job; it is a role.

The links in all that are not very clear and the meaning of "growing up" is ambiguous. But McLuhan is certainly saying that young people settle, not for ends and purposes (which imply movement out and from), but for balance on the spot, for overall openness and knowingness, for poise. Towards the end of his paper McLuhan quotes a young architect friend speaking about "his generation": "We are not goal-oriented, we just want to know what is going on." McLuhan adds: "The young today reject goals—they want roles—R-O-L-E-S—that is, involvement."

This situation is neither as new nor as total as McLuhan implies. He knows this well enough, though I am not sure that Tom Wolfe does. Still, what McLuhan says there bears directly on both Wolfe's subject-matter and—which is a different and more important question—on his success. On his subject-matter because, as I have said, he has realised that the search for poise is the impulse behind much in the behaviour of young people in commercial mass-societies, the urge to find a stance before all the free-floating and un-ordered offerings, a stance which accepts without altogether going under; but which rejects the calls of the old, goal-oriented world (the "sclerotic" world of adults, to use one of Wolfe's favourite words), since to do that would involve making choices of value, rejections. It would be inaccurate to call this the wish to stand "upright" in Emerson's sense or "vertical" in Auden's, since both of those speak from the old world, the world which could talk about the need to immerse in

¹ *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*. By TOM WOLFE. Cape, 30s.

the “destructive element”—and that adjective summons up a moral order.

Tom Wolfe’s success, then, is ensured because in describing the search for poise, he also exhibits one kind of available poise. He says, by all the breathy implications of his confident prose, “Look, it can be done.” And in doing so he appeals not just to teen-agers, probably few of whom ever read him, but to a much wider range of people who may not be young but who nevertheless feel a similar difficulty in making sense of mass society. Wolfe’s peculiar hold comes from his apparently sure possession of what looks like a possible stance. He has learned a style for the despair, though the style is often self-deluding and the despair never really faced. But that in itself is part of the point, part of the attraction, part of what is being said. For all the apparent command he is (to use terms coined by, I think, Dr. Leavis) more symptomatic than representative.

The assurance, the panache, is the most immediately striking quality. Mr. Wolfe has it partly because he knows his material so well, but also because he knows his readers *don’t* know it. Like the Fat Boy he is out to make his readers’ flesh creep, with conducted tours to “the teen-age netherworld.” And because his readers don’t know that world he can get away with murder. In the *New York Review of Books* a few months ago, Dwight Macdonald documented the inaccuracy of Wolfe’s reportage. This was apropos a description of *The New Yorker’s* editorial methods which was presumably written too late to appear in this volume. One would have had grave doubts even without Macdonald’s circumstantial analysis. Clearly Mr. Wolfe is a painstaking and tireless leech of a reporter. But he sometimes claims to know so much about what goes on inside that he begins to sound like an omniscient fictional narrator, the invisible man, the fly on the ceiling. Presumably he feels driven to this because everything has to be hep, to be souped up, lest dullness supervene. Look at this small but typical instance: “one has only to list the male stars of the past 20 years [he lists them, of course] . . . and already the mind is overpowered by an awesome montage of swung fists, bent teeth, curled lips, popping neck veins and gurglings.” Well—not quite, though one sees the tiny point. Practically every *aperçu* (and some are shrewd) has to be driven home with a vivid metaphor; and often the vividness of the metaphor seems to have counted for more than its truth. Or it is used to inflate the experience, grossly. A youth from Lafayette, Indiana, who was bitten with the bug to “customise” cars went off to California where that activity is at its most

advanced. (“What you have is something like sculpture in the era of Benvenuto Cellini,” says Mr. Wolfe helpfully). Then he came home with his own customised car:

I like to conjecture about his parents. I don’t know anything about them, really. All I know is, I would have had a hell of a lump in my throat if I had seen Ronny coming up to the front door in his tangerine-flake car, bursting so flush and vertical with triumph that no one would ever think of him as a child of the red sulk—Ronny, all the way back from California with his grill.

Sometimes Wolfe’s hectic knowingness becomes a parody even of itself:

O, dear, sweet Harry, with your French gangster-movie bangs, your Ski-Shop turtleneck sweater and your Army-Navy Store blue denim shirt over it, with your Bloomsbury corduroy pants you saw in the *Manchester Guardian* air-mail edition and sent away for and your sly intellectual pigeon-toed libido roaming in Greenwich village. . . .

We are forced to think that Mr. Wolfe is less fussy about accuracy than about making sure that his prose is always swinging. To complain about this is not a niggling concern for accuracy, a concern which can be brushed aside by the claim that nevertheless the general “feel” of the descriptions is right. It points to some of the more difficult disciplines in different styles of writing and, since Mr. Wolfe talks a great deal about the strains of “creating art objects,” he ought to think about these disciplines more. Documentary has its limits just as fiction has, and can’t pinch from fiction without harming both. Mr. Wolfe, one suspects, gives the glossy finish to his pieces by telling more than he could possibly know from his documentary position—and so does violence to his material and his human subjects. His essay on Harrison, the original publisher of *Confidential* (but now in the shade) is full of interesting detail. But by some extraordinarily fortunate chance, on the day Mr. Wolfe is interviewing the anxious Harrison in a restaurant, Walter Winchell comes in, is hailed by Harrison and cuts him:

Suddenly Harrison’s eyes are fixed on the door. There, by God, in the door is Walter Winchell. Winchell has on his snap-brim police reporter’s hat, circa 1924, and an overcoat with the collar turned up. He’s scanning the room, like Wild Bill Hickock entering the Crazy Legs Saloon. Harrison gives him a big smile and a huge wave. “There’s Walter!” he says.

Winchell gives an abrupt wave with his left hand, keeps his lips set like bowstrings and walks off to the opposite end of Lindy’s. . . .

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By and by Harrison, Reggie and I got up to leave and at the door Harrison says to the maître d':

"Where's Walter?"

"He left a little while ago," the maître d' says.

"He was with his granddaughter," Harrison says.

"Oh, was that who that was," the maître d' says.

"Yeah," says Harrison, "It was his granddaughter. I didn't want to disturb them."

It all comes too pat, like a movie-cliché. And it sounds very like a betrayal of the relation Tom Wolfe had established with Harrison for the purposes of the interview; it *uses* him. And for that matter it takes liberties with Winchell.

Still, Mr. Wolfe does know a great deal. He has not only been there; to some extent he has looked too. He has noted the curious social rituals of limousine-chauffeurs, waiting for their owners to come out of the opera in New York City; or the ways of New Jersey teenagers heading for the Manhattan discotheques:

They headed off up Front Street if it was, say, Plainfield, and caught the Somerset Line bus at the stop across the street from the Public Service building around 7:30 p.m. Their bouffant heads would be bouncing up and down like dandelions until the bus hit the Turnpike and those crazy blue lights out there on the toothpaste factories started streaming by. They went through the Lincoln Tunnel, up the spiral ramps into the Port Authority Terminal and disembarked at some platform with an incredible number like 155. One hundred and fifty-five bus platforms; this was New York.

He has listened to the jerky, groping for contact, gesturing style of contemporary teen-age talk, the dialogue of "You know . . . sort of . . . like . . . kind of . . . I mean . . ." He has thought a little about the inner meanings of teen-age display. He knows it cannot be explained only in terms of deliberate commercial manipulation but is created from a more complicated interplay. And to describe it all he has devised a style which gives his readers the feeling that at last they are really in the thick of it, immersed in it all and yet still riding. He is, to repeat, a talented writer, not only a processor—a clever drawer-upon layers of contemporary curiosities and responses—but occasionally more than that. He can show talent in what he would probably call "the old sclerotic literary sense" of the word. But it is on the whole a single-shot, metaphoric talent. He can (and this is only one of many such instances) speak about the "secret needle-toothed fury" of a toy poodle and a Yorkshire terrier barking at each other. He can make nicely grotesque juxtapositions,

especially about cultural pretensions. The President's wife attends the re-opening of the Museum of Modern Art:

In a few minutes she will address them all, in a drawl that sounds like it came by mail order from Pine Bluff, concerning God, Immortality and Inspiration through Art for the free peoples.

Such gifts being recognised, you still have to separate fairly obvious devices from more symptomatic elements. Recurrent devices include the casual, *in medias res* openings ("One thing that struck my mind, for some reason, was . . ."; "All right, Charlotte, you gorgeous. . ."; "It is a very odd, nice, fey thing. . ."; "Please do not get the idea. . ."); and the saturation-bombing openings ("pastel cars, aqua green, aqua blue, aqua beige, aqua buff, aqua dawn, aqua dusk. . ."; "Hai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-. . ."). Then there are strings of "in" phrases like "Whatever became of. . .", and favourite unusual words such as "infarcted," "psychedelic," "epopt." Once he has found a word or verbal device he likes Mr. Wolfe uses it relentlessly—it becomes a trademark: the sun "explodes" off windscreens I don't know how many times, and "sclerotic" is always with us.

His style is to quite a large extent a montage of other men's styles. His great catalogues of proper names recall his namesake, Thomas Wolfe. Hemingway has helped with the use of the continuous present, and with "and" used as the link between flat successive clauses. Scott Fitzgerald has taught him something about catching the breathless near-hysterical syncopation of scenes from fashionable life:

Goldie and the Gingerbreads are on a stand at one end of the studio, all electric, electric guitars, electric bass, drums, loudspeakers, and a couple of spotlights exploding off the gold lamé. *Baby baby baby where did our love go*. The music suddenly fills up the room like a giant egg slicer. Sally Kirkland, Jr., a young actress, is out on the studio floor in a leopard print dress with her vast mane flying, doing the frug with Jerry Schatzberg. . . .

From Graham Greene he presumably got the three-tier dying fall to end a paragraph ("takes him by the hand and heads for home, the white brick tower, the tacky Louis chaises and the gathering good news"). *Finnegans Wake* makes a small contribution, and there are strong similarities to Aldous Huxley. Huxley likes to penetrate glossy social surfaces by a sudden, brutal anatomical reference. Off with these lendings; back to the poor, bare, forked animal. Wolfe uses this device until it

sounds like a trick or tic. The text is scattered with sudden shock references to the ischium and the ilial crest, glutei maximi, trapezii, gemelli, latissimae dorsae. But, to finish with echoes, guess how many you can pick up in this clever confection. It is Sunday in New York City:

Anne would make scrambled eggs, plain scrambled eggs, but it was a feast. It was incredible. She would bring out a couple of those little smoked fish with golden skin and some smoked oysters that always came in a little can with ornate lettering and royal colours and flourishes and some Kissebrot bread and black cherry preserves, and then the coffee. They had about a million cups of coffee apiece, until the warmth seemed to seep through your whole viscera. And then cigarettes. The cigarettes were like some soothing incense. The radiator was always making a hissing sound and then a clunk. The sun was shining in and the fire escapes and effluvia ducts were just silhouettes out there someplace. George would tear off another slice of Kissebrot and pile on some black cherry preserves and drink some more coffee and have another cigarette, and Anne crossed her legs under the terrycloth bathrobe and crossed her arms and drew on her cigarette, and that was the way it went.

ALL THESE ECHOES have their uses, as short-cuts to the dominant moods. The most revealing of them is the use of details, of the names of things. Some contemporary English observers like detail too (*e.g.*, Nell Dunn) but it doesn't sound the same. Some English writers have long liked to list particulars and name prices; Virginia Woolf attacked them when she attacked Arnold Bennett. But again it is not the same. I think Virginia Woolf was wrong about Arnold Bennett; for him the poetry was in the particulars. For many Americans—and certainly for Tom Wolfe—the poetry *is* the particulars. The daftest passage in this whole book is Wolfe's reference to Wordsworth's inventories: "his glorious delicatessen owner's love of minute inventory would overwhelm him." Nothing could be farther from the inner meaning of Wordsworth's naming of the names; but it might do for Tom Wolfe himself.

The American love of detail is, of course, different from ours and goes far back and deep into American experience. It has to do with the continuing sense of the need—the imperative, the challenge—to confront the mass and variety and reality of brute experience; it has to do with the need to make sense of the shapeless amorphous massiveness of democratic existence; it has to do (as David Lodge pointed out in a review of this book) with the Redskin/

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Paleface polarity. For all his cracks about "an ancient, aristocratic aesthetic," Tom Wolfe is substantially a Paleface pretending to be a Red-skin, fascinated and slightly appalled at his own daring but always dragged back to the wild, wild scene. Wolfe's exposure to this situation is not quite the same as that of his 19th-century American predecessors. It has a particularly mid-20th-century nervous edge. He dives into the mass, rolls in it, shows he isn't afraid of it, comes up with handfuls, arranges it into sharp, sure little structures. "Murray the K, the D.J. and M.C., O.K.?, comes out from the wings, doing a kind of twist soft shoe, wiggling around, a stocky chap, thirty-eight years old, wearing Italian pants and a Sun Valley snow lodge sweater and a Stingy Brim straw hat. Murray the K! Girls throw balls of paper at him, and as they arc onto the stage, the stage lights explode off them and they look like falling balls of flame."

There is a sort of nervous exhilaration in watching him do it. He is making order out of that "bafflement"; he's dancing above Niagara on a tightrope. And so he speaks to more than American experience today, though probably especially to that. It is essential to get all the names spinning, not to pin them down but so that the reader can feel "involved" in "what's going on," in Marshall McLuhan's phrases. Somehow if you name it you will get a meaning out of it. No: that's the wrong way to put it; somehow, the meaning *is* the thing itself.

Contributing to the total mixture, laced through all these—through the devices, the echoes, the expected big gestures, the naming of the names—is a more personal characteristic which, so far as I know, has not been remarked on before. Wolfe is a very sensual writer, a very sexual writer. Of course, he flogs his inventions to death, here as elsewhere; but you can still tell that a sharp nerve is being stroked. Well may he cry: "Ah, sweet little cigarette-ad. blonde!" He is deeply responsive to the nymphets, the "flaming little buds" as he so often calls them, to the half-exposed globes of their buttocks, their high tight breasts and their "little cupcake bottoms":

Elsewhere, Las Vegas' beautiful little high-school buds in their buttocks-décolletage stretch pants are back on the foam-rubber upholstery of luxury broughams peeling off the entire chick ensemble long enough to establish the highest venereal-disease rate among high-school students anywhere north of the yaws-rotting shanty jungles of the Eighth Parallel.

In getting the right poise this is probably the trickiest element. But a good ambiguous adverb

can usually hold the scales between an older man's sexuality and the need to be a sympathetic but detached reporter. A group of girls are waiting to get a famous D.J.'s autograph:

One of them is squeezed into a pair of short shorts that come up to about her iliac crest. Coming down over her left breast she has a row of buttons. The top one says, "We love the Beatles" [and so on down to one button whose motto is only roughly pencilled in]. But so what? The letters are big, and her little mary poppins tremble honestly.

That final adverb just, but only just, preserves the poise. But it does so by being intellectually dishonest, through sentimentality.

YET THE MOST IMPORTANT ingredient in the whole cocktail—if it is to serve its readers in the way they need—is not the fact that Tom Wolfe loves the material. It's that he also hates it. And that he usually manages to hold these two moods in suspension. It is particularly important to be clear here. I am not pointing to the large, self-conscious, critical gestures, the constant use of OK intellectual names and notions (Weber, alienation, Apollonian *v.* Dionysian, symbolic logic). Almost all of this is rubbish, as are the frequent historical vistas ("The Emperor Commodus... the Earl of Chesterfield... Phil Spector"). No more than top dressing; Mr. Wolfe has no real critical distance. His dislike, when it comes out, comes out hard and the boat is only just saved from capsizing. He can, of course, make routine gestures of rejection in the usual form ("It is as if there were a communal fear that someone, somewhere in Las Vegas, was going to be left with a totally vacant minute on his hands"). But he really *embodies* the rejection when he looks close:

...he was wearing a striped polo shirt with a hip Hollywood solid-color collar, and she had on Capri pants, and hooked across their wrinkly old faces they both had rimless, wraparound French sun-glasses of the sort young-punk heroes in *Nouvelle vague* movies wear, and it was impossible to give any earnest contemplation to a word they said. They seemed to have the great shiny popeyes of a praying mantis.

He pins Mick Jagger in action with a horrified accuracy:

...this boy has exceptional lips. He has two peculiarly gross and extraordinary red lips. They hang off his face like giblets. Slowly his eyes pour over the flaming bud horde soft as Karo syrup and then close and then the lips start spreading into the most languid, most confiden-

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tial, the wettest, most labial, most concupiscent grin imaginable. Nirvana! The buds start shrieking, pawing toward the stage.

He has an exact eye for nastiness: vicious whores, brutish cab-drivers. Most of all, he hates and fears the thought of ageing. I gave up counting the number of contemptuous references to the old or the unvirile; they include "bad hair and reedy faces," "ageing mastoids," "ratty people with ratty hair and corroded thoracic boxes," "crusty old arteriosclerotic bastards" . . . all of them "shuffling their shanks." He may not fully see the skull beneath the skin but he notes and can't forget that after 40 "the packing under the skin begins to dry up, wither away." For a 33-year-old this seems a pretty desperate holding-on to youth; there's still a lot of twilight to get through.

Almost predictably, the strongest reactions are roused against women once sexually attractive but now ageing. This is more than setting the young against the old, one generation against its predecessor; it's the old, old elemental retching at the ephemerality of sexual allure, and nausea at its last gasps. The sexual disgust flares again and again:

Mrs. Janson fades up the street with her rusting gams and her three Welsh corgies.

Convalescing dowagers taking the rays with lap robes from the old La Salle sedan days over their atrophying shanks.

So gorgeous Charlotte twists around in the chair with her alabaster legs and lamb-chop shanks still crossed and locked together in hard, slippery, glistening skins of nylon and silk. . .

Mr. Wolfe could be a religious recluse at 40. But he might have to fight harder than he has fought so far if he wished to save himself from being the pop-purveyor to the New Manichees.

ONE COULD GO ON, isolating the elements which help to make up this elaborate balance. But just one more item, and then to move on. The most effective essays (effective in their own terms, that is) are very cunningly structured, and the best is "The Last American Hero," which is about stock-car racing in North Carolina and stock-car culture in general. Souped-up, breathless, detailed, it races along and does seem to get close to the feel of the things it describes. Wolfe weaves into it too a sense of its significance as a symbol of traditional tensions between North and South, as an instance of the collapse of lower-middle-class cultural models, as a contemporary form of Southern States' rhetorical-heroic (echoes of Robert Penn

Warren here), and so on. It is all very smoothly and energetically done. He has a well-developed sense of when to bring in a new theme, when to alter shutter-opening and speed, when to vary pressure—a well-developed sense, that is, of how to do all these things *so that the poise is maintained*.

SO I COME BACK for the last time to the question of poise, to the meaning of this apparent grappling with the swirling phenomena of mass society. In intellectual circles the discussion about the larger issues, in the U.S. and elsewhere, often becomes an argument between the defenders of the old "high culture" and the welcomers of the new. Among contemporary American commentators—though these placings are bound to be too unqualified—you would find, say, Dwight Macdonald and Hannah Arendt on one side and Edward Shils and Patrick Hazard on the other. In Britain you could, just as easily and roughly, place names on each side.

Where Tom Wolfe and his poise fit in can be made clearer by reference again to the distinction between representative and symptomatic literature. Roughly, symptomatic literature is a symptom of its time, a specimen. Properly regarded, it tells you something about (usually something nasty about) the quality of life in a society. Representative literature examines and explores these conditions and is thus, in a difficult but important sense, outside of them. I am not altogether happy with "representative" as the second term. It could appear to mean "representing the state of things" and so seem almost synonymous with "symptomatic." We need a word which suggests "exploratory . . . analytic . . . critical." But probably it is safe to assume that the contrast in meaning between the two terms is sufficiently known.

It would be easy to settle for saying that Tom Wolfe is both representative and symptomatic on the grounds that, though he usually immerses himself in the material he occasionally floats free. But even though his criticisms may sometimes be sharp and brilliant they are, in total effect, local. He never drives them home, never stays with them so long that they hurt. His apparent representativeness is really only an aspect of his symptomatic character. What is at bottom being offered is not a position from without but a poise from within. The most apt epigram—only a little too strong—is in the essay on Harrison of *Confidential*. "Okay, it was bogus. . . . But by God the whole thing had style." Such a poise is not juxtaposition; you do not reach it by being enthusiastic in one para-

graph and sombrely critical in the next. It's more subtle than that. You have to keep all doors open, yet never fully go through any one. Acceptance must always keep at the back of the mind the idea of—not the acted fact of—rejection. Rejection must not close any doors—never quite close any doors—on the pleasures of acceptance. The delicate, iridescent film must never be quite broken, though it can be made to bend; that film is, verbally, the play of tone within a narrow range; and, intellectually, the play of perceptions, which may be sharp but not so sharp as to break the skin. We are left feeling that we have never realised how glittering, how interesting in itself, the surface is until that long-legged fly danced on it.

This is why Mr. Wolfe is more symptomatic than representative, though very sophisticatedly symptomatic. His style is the symptom of an important characteristic of modern mass communications. When this period's cultural history comes to be written one chapter ought to have the heading: "It ain't what you do; it's the way that you do it." Mr. Wolfe's medium, his stylistic poise, is more important than his message, his manner more than his matter. His spiritual sister is Baby Jane Holzer, the subject of one of his essays: "She does not attempt to come on sexy. Her excitement is something else. It is almost pure excitement. It is the excitement of the New Style." We are back once again with Marshall McLuhan, for whom the medium is the message. The way of doing it is the thing being done. Wolfe's book illustrates both the degree of truth in this dictum and the awful shortcomings of the position it describes (shortcomings McLuhan has so far been reluctant to examine).

IN RUSSIA the authorities fear that to expose their people to the open, multitudinous play of messages in a "free" consumers' society would be to risk making them dissident (*i.e.*, in search of other goals). So Russian teen-agers are not required to be "data processors" on anything approaching the Western scale. You can see this in the different set of their faces (whether they are accepters or rejectors of the status quo) and in their much less fluid style and gestures. But if Marshall McLuhan is right—and Tom Wolfe's success seems to bear him out—then the Russian authorities are mistaken. The best way to keep their people from seeking alternative goals would be to flood them with "data," to offer them the chance to become anxious only about "form," so that they came to believe that goals are out and poise in. Then they might keep on playing roles endlessly, and harmlessly—with no political effect. But by God they'd have style!

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Lionel Trilling's Uncertainties

By Tony Tanner

"ONLY THE SELF that is certain of its existence, of its identity, can do without the armour of systematic certainties." This quotation from *The Opposing Self* takes us directly to Lionel Trilling's novel, *The Middle of the Journey* (1947) which, in effect, was about the ordeal of a modern liberal (John Laskell) who undergoes a *crise de conscience* and emerges with a certainty about his own identity and selfhood which enables him to pass beyond the need for "systematic certainties."

The book opens with Laskell and Maxim on a train. Maxim is an ex-member of the Communist party (Whittaker Chambers?) "who believed he did not exist, who was now on his way to make arrangements about acquiring an existence." Being uncertain of his existence, Maxim adopts the protective "armour of systematic certainties" in the form of reactionary Christianity. And if he is extreme and doctrinaire so, in their own way, are Laskell's other friends, the Crooms—fierce adherents of a rather fatuously optimistic and committed leftist liberalism. The schematically arranged arguments in the book revolve around the quarrel between two "systematic certainties": one, that all men are fully responsible and thus all are equally guilty (as Maxim insists); the other, that man cannot be blamed or held answerable since it is environment that is at fault (the position of the Crooms). Laskell, going beyond ideology, adopts a position of honest uncertainty. He says, near the end:

"An absolute freedom from responsibility—that much of a child none of us can be. An absolute responsibility—that much of a divine or metaphysical essence none of us is. . . . I cannot absolve the world or society or God or my parents or nature from all blame for what I am or do. I didn't make myself and I don't dare cut my connection with all the things that made me. I cannot hold myself free of these things. I will blame them when they injure and reduce me, as they do every moment of the day. And for that matter, I cannot avoid my gratitude to them."

Maxim defines Laskell's position with regard to the two extremes: "you spoke up for something between. Call it the human being in maturity, at once responsible and conditioned."

Laskell's stance not only suggests the supple, probing and unpolemical mind that Trilling brings to criticism; his problems, preoccupations, and the values he avows, seem to be Trilling's own. Trilling's first collection of essays was arranged as an attempt to explore the paradoxes of "the Liberal Imagination," and the terms of his admiration for two writers in particular suggest an attitude to life already outlined in the portrait of John Laskell. Thus he more than once quotes, with approval, the famous lines from Keats (whom he quotes so often) concerning "negative capability," and the ability and inner strength to remain "in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts." This ability is one which those who need "systematic certainties" will despise as a mere limpness of mind, an abdication from intellectual effort. But Trilling insists that it is the ability of the really great writers, "it is precisely an aspect of their intelligence, of their seeing the full force and complexity of their subject matter." And when he discusses Freud we note again Trilling's respect for the complex, the "uncertain" view of man. Whatever else Freud did (and Trilling has many points of disagreement), he did not "narrow and simplify the human world."

Despite popular belief to the contrary, man, as Freud conceives him, is not to be understood by any simple formula (such as sex) but is rather an inextricable tangle of culture and biology. And not being simple, he is not simply good; he has, as Freud says somewhere, a kind of hell within him from which rise everlastingly the impulses which threaten his civilisation. . . . His best qualities are the result of a struggle whose outcome is tragic. Yet he is a creature of love. . . .

If Trilling has devoted much of his life to writing about literature when he is also very concerned with politics and sociology, it must be precisely because, as he claimed, "literature is the human activity that takes the fullest and most precise account of variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty." The lazy or frightened mind seeks the refuge of ideology ("ideology is not the product of thought"): those capable of "the energy of the encompassing mind" will persist in uncertainty, if only out of respect for everything that cannot be finally known about ourselves and our world.

GIVEN Trilling's particular focus it is hardly surprising that the most recurrent issue in his essays is really the question of the relationship between the self and the society around it, or, more generally, the tensions between the human spirit and the forces and things which condition it. In his next book, *The Opposing Self* (1955), Keats is almost literally the "hero," and not least because "he affirms the creativity of the self that opposes circumstance" at the same time as he confronts the "impossibilities" of life, *i.e.*, all that which frustrates and hampers the urge for self-affirmation. In his Letters "he has brought his two knowledges face to face, the knowledge of the world of circumstance, of death and cancer, and the knowledge of the world of self, of spirit and creation, and the delight in them. Each seems a whole knowledge considered alone; each is but a half-knowledge when taken with the other; both together constitute a truth." Trilling often returns to those passages where Keats grapples with the paradoxical search for "Identity" in "a world of Circumstances," and he reveres him for maintaining a mature and courageous balance between "the knowledge of evil and the knowledge of self." Keats turns up again in a brilliant essay on William Dean Howells in which Trilling accuses the American imagination of

harbouring "the demand for life as pure spirit" in disregard of the world of conditioning factors. That world may be evil, but it must be known and faced.

The knowledge of the antagonism between spirit and the conditioned—it is Donne's, it is Pascal's, it is Tolstoy's—may in literature be a cause of great delight because it is so rare and difficult. . . . The reason Shakespeare holds his place in our imagination is that in him the sense of evil and the sense of life are in so delicate and continuous a reciprocation. And the ground of Keats' greatness, I have come to feel, is that precarious reciprocation of self and evil, similar to Shakespeare's.

Throughout the book whenever he is discussing great writers, Trilling reverts to the same terminology. Tolstoy has that rare knowledge which comes from "the understanding of spirit as it exists in the inescapable conditions which the actual and trivial make for it." Flaubert wrote out of "despair of culture" and effectively "asks what remains when culture is rejected and transcended. The answer . . . is that something of highest value does remain—it is the self affirmed in self-denial." Similarly, he finds in *Mansfield Park* a crucial paradox: "that the self may destroy the self by the very energies that define its being, that the self may

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be preserved by the negation of its own energies." In Trilling's literary criticism there is always this underlying question—what does this writer tell us of the self and its potentialities, its duties, its sufferings in a world of conditioning circumstances?

It was thus hardly surprising that in an essay in his next book (*A Gathering of Fugitives*, 1957) Trilling should discuss the work of David Riesman (*The Lonely Crowd*, etc.) with considerably more enthusiasm than the work of any contemporary novelist.

Riesman has the intrusive curiosity that is the mark of the classic novelist. The novelist, in his ideal condition... is the artist of the conditioned, of the impingement of things upon spirit and of spirit upon things, and the success of his enterprise depends as much upon his awareness of things as upon his awareness of spirit.

Riesman, as Trilling sees him, "finds it possible to maintain the old ambivalence towards society in full force, although in new form. He accepts society in all its paradoxes, ambiguities, anomalies, contradictions, and ironies." Like Trilling, like John Laskell, Riesman "is truly double-minded in his response to society—exactly in the degree he accepts American society, he fears and suspects it." But it is equally important to have a sense of the value of the individual self and Trilling also finds in Riesman (what perhaps others would not find), "an assumption of the pleasure of being an individual and free... his 'poetry' of individualism." The end of this essay reveals Trilling's position in a clear light. He reverts to the old problem of how to remain an individual when confronted by modern society. There is the act of violent and absolute repudiation—Rimbaud, Lawrence—but few can, or wish to, imitate that. But is there not another way, the way of Montaigne?—"the stubbornness of Montaigne's sense of the self, his privacy, the catholicity of his awareness and responsiveness, the virtues of his mind which he required to be, in the famous phrase, *ondoyant et divers*." We can hardly suppose that Trilling wishes other than to emulate precisely those virtues. It is no insult to say that he lacks the toughness, the rigour, and the profundity of Montaigne's rich mind. But the last paragraph of this essay reminds us of two writers with whom he is entitled to be discussed. He is referring to a diminishing idea which he holds valuable; the idea "that one may live a real life apart from the group, that one may exist as an actual person not only at

the centre of society but on its margins, that one's values may be none the less real and valuable because they do not prevail and are even rejected and submerged, that as a person one has not ceased to exist because one has 'failed.'" Not for nothing has Trilling written books on Matthew Arnold (who, after all, first formulated the idea of the responsible intellectual "alien," as opposed to the romantic rebel) and E. M. Forster (whose delicate humane wisdom thrives only in the margins of society since the clash of ideologies at the centre drowns out all subtler voices).

IN HIS NEW COLLECTION of essays, *Beyond Culture*,¹ Trilling returns again and again to the same preoccupations and problems. The same patient penetration and consideration are at work, though just occasionally it sounds as though the ability to live strenuously among uncertainties has slackened into a habit. There are detectable vaguenesses, and some paragraphs and essays break off or fade away just at the point one would have liked a fiercer effort at clarification. And he is occasionally wary in a manner that transcends scholarly tact. Thus from one page I gather the following phrases: "I confess to being of the opinion... I am constrained to heed the contention... Let us, then, stay confirmed in our belief... But it may be worth asking," and so on. No one with his earned stature need be as tentative and delicate as *that*! But given the importance and centrality of the questions which Trilling is asking, these stylistic matters are unimportant. Still the impression one intermittently gets is that his ambivalent attitude to the problematical relationship between self and society, the human spirit and the conditioning world, is tending towards direct contradiction. It seems at times as though we must both move "beyond culture" and yet never forget that we can only fulfil ourselves within it; similarly the idea of the "autonomy" of the human spirit is both demanded and censured. He seems to feel almost imprisoned within the problems and paradoxes inherent in his rather select and oft-repeated vocabulary. There is something in the tone—between disenchantment and pessimism—which gives some of the essays an almost elegiac note. Are things getting darker or clearer when he refers to "what I take to be a progressive deterioration of accurate knowledge of the self and of the right relation between the self and the culture"?

He stresses that "Freud does indeed see the self as formed by its culture. But he also sees the self as set against the culture, struggling against it." It would seem that although Trilling believes that man can only find true fulfilment in a sympathetic cultural environment, he has

¹ *Beyond Culture*. By LIONEL TRILLING. Secker & Warburg, 35s.

a growing fear that contemporary culture may seduce, rather than coerce, the self into total submission. Thus he insists upon Freud's "tragic sense of culture, his apparent wish to establish the self beyond the reach of culture" and in this connection he welcomes "the place he gives to biology in human fate." For Trilling wants to reassert that "some part of our fate comes from outside the culture." He is so uneasy about the subtle ways in which contemporary culture takes over and manipulates the self that he is glad to reflect, following Freud, that "somewhere in the child, somewhere in the adult, there is a hard, irreducible, stubborn core of biological urgency... that culture cannot reach and that reserves the right... to judge the culture and resist and revise it." This feeling for that part of man which can resist the conditioning of culture is at work in a wide-ranging speculative essay on "The Fate of Pleasure." Wordsworth could make confident references to "the grand elementary principle of pleasure," but many subsequent writers (like Dostoevsky) have denied or refused pleasure in the name of something more important to the life of the self. This choice of "unpleasure" may seem perverse, but it can also be a gesture of independence and freedom. "For to want what is commonly thought to be appropriate to men... is to admit and consent to the *conditioned* nature of man." The refusal of conventional "pleasure" may well contain an aspiration towards "spirituality," and reveals the apparent ability of the self to repudiate the standards and values and preferences of the age in which it finds itself. In a society which preaches uncritical adjustment, Trilling wants to keep alive the idea, not necessarily of anarchic rebellion or flight, but of critical resistance; he reminds us, time and again, that "the particular concern of the literature of the last two centuries has been with the self in its standing quarrel with culture." The quarrel must go on. Freud is important because he, too, had this "intense conviction of the existence of the self apart from culture." This dread of the total invasion and domination of the self by the surrounding "culture," though it speaks to us all, seems to be particularly powerful in America. It provides, for instance, the dark inspiration for William Burroughs' nightmare work; it prompts the semi-hysteria of many of Norman Mailer's essays; it crows and dispirits many of Saul Bellow's characters. It is the shaping force of much American sociology.

THE PECULIAR VALUE of Trilling's work is that he brings to the problem an unusual wisdom and patience; his reading of literature has prepared him for shades and paradoxes which

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simply madden hastier, cruder minds. In his fine essay on *Emma* which delicately explores the attraction it has held for so many readers, he suggests that Jane Austen "was aware of the increase of the psychological burden of the individual, she understood the new necessity of conscious self-definition and self-criticism, the need to make private judgments of reality"; and in *Emma* she "contrives an idyllic world... and brings into contrast with it the actualities of the social world, of the modern self." If the book finally has a magic charm it is perhaps because it represents "the possibility of controlling the personal life, of becoming acquainted with ourselves, of creating a community of 'intelligent love.'" Turning to a very different writer, Isaac Babel, Trilling tries to define the secret of his power and strange appeal, and again he singles out a Keatsian "double" feeling—Babel's sense both of the violence and actual evils of the world, and a sense of what opposes this. An essay on Hawthorne takes us back to another of Trilling's habitual preoccupations. "Hawthorne always consented to the power of his imagination being controlled by the power of the world" whereas many of the most important modern writers (Kafka) are valued precisely because they assert the ability of the human imagination to transcend or ignore "the actual" altogether. Here Trilling half-turns against himself. Although he cherishes the idea of a self "beyond culture" he also sees a loss involved in this modern preoccupation with "the ideal of the autonomous self." His point is, I imagine, that absolute autonomy, like absolute conditioning, diminishes and impoverishes human life. Hawthorne may not be gratifying but he is curiously liberating. "He has no great tyrant-dream in which we can take refuge, he leaves us face to face with the ultimately unmodifiable world, of which our undifferentiated human nature is a part." Hawthorne, perhaps we could say, keeps up the dialectic between human imagination and material circumstances which Trilling finds most rewarding.

Apart from a judicious essay on the Leavis-Snow controversy (which contains, characteristically, a plea for the old notion of the "disinterested" man), there are two essays (one published last year in *ENCOUNTER*) in this collection which reveal Trilling's own most recent questions—to himself, to his culture. Modern literature (and the teaching of literature) had, in the past, the value of preserving a sense of the self which could stand out against the encroaching pressures of the culture and society of the time. But what happens when the "aliens" form a comfortable class of their own, an imprisoning cultural orthodoxy with "firm

presuppositions, received ideas, approved attitudes, and a system of rewards and punishments"? Modern literature used to shock the complacent middle classes with its reminders of the abyss and its stress on damnation and salvation. Yet any teacher of literature must nowadays be struck by "the readiness of the students to engage in the process we might call the socialisation of the anti-social, or the acculturation of the anti-cultural, or the legitimisation of the subversive." You teach what should be dynamite—and the students come glibly back with

variations on the accepted formulations about *anxiety*, and *urban society*, and *alienation*, and *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, all the matter of the academic disciplines which are founded upon the modern self-consciousness and the modern self-pity.

No one who has had anything to do with the teaching of literature can fail to take Trilling's point.

The theory of literary education as it was first formulated supposed that literature carried the self beyond culture, that it induced or allowed the self to detach itself from its bondage to the idols of the Market-place, the Tribe, the Theatre, and even of the Cave. Perhaps literature was once able to do this, or something near enough to it to satisfy the theory. But now we must ask whether this old intention has not been inverted, and whether literature does not, in fact, set up the old idols in new forms of its own experience.

We must ask...indeed we must, but, disappointingly, by way of some sort of tentative answer Trilling requotes a favourite passage from Keats which he *also* quotes at the end of the other essay. It is the passage which asserts that poetry "is not so fine a thing as philosophy—For the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth." This is very unsatisfactory—not of Keats, but of Trilling. Keats was surely referring at that time to the particular kind of poetry which strives to recreate the sheer energy and qualities and bounty of nature without attempting to evaluate and comprehend it. But there is a kind of poetry which contains both eagles and truths. The notion that poetry is necessarily antipathetic to, and lower than, philosophy was resoundingly challenged—and I would have said successfully—by authorities as ancient as Sir Philip Sidney, and even Aristotle himself. Trilling is saying that in our present confusion when everybody discusses fashions and styles instead of truths, we had better call the "rational intellect" into play. Agreed. But must we, then, give up literature for philosophy? Trilling himself once attacked

T. S. Eliot's contention that Shakespeare and Dante did no thinking of their own: "It must puzzle us to know what thinking is if Shakespeare and Dante did not do it." No, the Keats' quotation placed at the end of two question-raising essays is an inadequate gesture, more uncertain than cryptic.

The questions Trilling asks are profoundly important—what is happening to the self in our culture? what can we learn from modern literature? what are we doing when we set out to "teach" literature? what are the possibly un-

desirable effects of the power of modern criticism? But, Montaigne and "*Que sais-je?*" to the contrary notwithstanding, if Lionel Trilling cannot provide at least some clues, possible answers, some authoritative advice, then things have come to a pretty pass. Trilling has made us more aware, and I do not wish to sound ungrateful. Indeed it is a measure of his achieved distinction that although he has given us so much, we should ask for something more—not "systematic certainties," of course, but perhaps some directions for the journey.

The Exposed Heart

By Colin Falck

THE TIME may have come, Erich Heller warned us some fifteen years ago in *The Disinherited Mind*,

... the time for the dovecot, for the home-coming, for the realisation that we have assimilated as many terrors as we can without being destroyed. There is a point beyond which there is no recovery for the exposed heart. Too many terrors dull the mind, too many riches impoverish the imagination.

The time may have come, that is, for an end to the Romantic-Symbolist tradition in poetry. And others more recently have joined their prayers with his, calling the poets back to the fold, to the virtues of reason, to the noble and interminable task of helping to build the Just City. There is less talk today than there used to be of "pure" poetry, of the cruel polarities of art and life, of the need for the poet to choose, in Yeats' words, "perfection of the life or of the work"; and if most of our poets have now committed themselves to losing beauty and terror alike in the more business-like processes of amateur inquisition, few of our critics have been uncivilised enough to blame them.

I suppose it was Nazism more than anything else that set this crusade in motion—just as it was the Germans more than anyone else who first succumbed to the romantic heresy. What it amounts to is a new fear of magic. The fear is easy to understand: those who have seen the irrational systematically embodied in political life—and even perhaps those who haven't—might be forgiven for wanting to exorcise it from art. It was Adolf Hitler, after all, who said "I go the way that Providence dictates with the assurance of a sleep-walker." He too was after

perfection of a kind. But can we fear magic without at the same time fearing art itself? Let us suppose that the poets of the 1920s really were "fascists." Can we not learn, as they perhaps never learned, to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to art the things that are art's? When an artist—one thinks above all of Brecht—makes a theory out of the need to resist entrancement the result can be a virtual war on the creative imagination.

One of the best case studies for future historians of this subject will surely be that of W. H. Auden. Auden knows the Germans well, has called Wagner "perhaps the greatest genius that ever lived," and has had the courage to suggest that "all poets adore explosions, thunderstorms, tornadoes, conflagrations, ruins [and] scenes of spectacular carnage." But he has then gone on to say that "the poetical imagination is therefore not at all a desirable quality in a chief of state" and to develop his own very personal answer to Romantic-Symbolism—his theory of the Poet and the City, of poetry as a difficult game divorced altogether from the serious business of living. Magic, he believes, has no place in the affairs of life, and in practice "there must always be two kinds of art—escape art, for man needs escape as he needs food and deep sleep, and parable art, that art which shall teach man to unlearn hatred and to learn love. . . ."

Art, in other words, is not the creation of forms which symbolise and make sense of our feelings in real life. It is a second, escape world cut off from the real life altogether. And rendering unto Caesar is not a matter of using the discoveries of art for the saner management of life: it is the adulteration of art itself with the philosophy of life that the artist already holds. Respon-

sible poetry therefore becomes a kind of war-time fruit cake, with the raisins of escape thinly distributed in a daily bread of parable. Many people would feel that these rather prosaic theories have left their mark on Auden's own poetry. But is the truer story perhaps that it happened the other way round? Inside the Auden we know, that is to say, there was once a Romantic-Symbolist signalling to be let out; something happened to the signals, and the poet began casting around for an external authority which would free him from the authority of poetry itself; his criticism, after those first experiments with "negative capability," became a long effort to domesticate the doctrines of Romantic-Symbolism; morality was called in to drive the spectres out, and the poet's house was consecrated against all destructive elements.

But if theory cannot create poetry it cannot destroy it either, and no amount of mistaken aesthetics can conjure away Auden's finest moments. Sometimes they really are images of escape:

*Altogether elsewhere, vast
Herds of reindeer move across
Miles and miles of golden moss,
Silently and very fast.*

But sometimes, as in the beautiful last stanza of "Birthday Poem (To Christopher Isherwood)", the poet is there in the poem himself, and it is his experience of the scene around him which is caught and held. Eliot apart, perhaps no other modern poet has had Auden's power to capture the timeless moment, the still point, and to withdraw it in its full intensity from the flood of history. Auden has said that we must avoid the temptation to "play God" with words: it is not poetry's business to reach after the perfection of Being. But in his own best poetry he has yielded to the temptation and allowed himself to dwell in magical experience for as long as the spell would last. One of his most perfect poems, surely, is "A Summer Night 1933," where the spell is the only thing that matters, where the talk that runs through the poem is part of the intense experience of the summer night, and where there is no extraneous theorising or any of the tiresome "wit that spoils Romantic art." Another fine example is the "Song" from *Nones* ("Deftly, admiral, cast your fly/Into the slow deep hover"). Both of these poems are songs among the ruins of the modern world rather than parables for the improvement of it.

BUT IN ANOTHER WAY Auden has remained true to his theories: the magic

that he has dealt in has always been benign. Nowhere in his poetry are there any real explosions, thunderstorms, or scenes of spectacular carnage; instead, we have the nursery-rhyme horrors of the Scissor Man and the schoolboy-sinister threatening of some disaster too nameless to be named. As a result, the poetry is shut off from most of the real terrors of adult life: we can talk about such things from a safe distance, perhaps, but they must never be summoned up in imagery. And it is consistent with his theories too that Auden has rarely managed (or tried?) to build his lyrical moments outwards into something more substantial. We live, after all, in a time-bound world of action and movement. The magic moments pass, and what shall the poet do then? A poet less committed to Christian dogma might feel that he should try to weave his magic into the rhythms of life and give the timeless whatever chance it may have of redeeming history. ("Of such moments," Mrs. Ramsay tells us in *To the Lighthouse*, "the thing is made that remains for ever after.") But for Auden—to whom the only unacknowledged legislators of the world are the secret police—the answer is: talk. Once, it was the glittering, image-laden talk of "Dover 1937" or of "Consider." Today it is one kind or another of urbane ratiocination. The Image, it seems, has been withdrawn; but instead of a Dejection Ode we are given a detached and moralistic kind of verse which depends for its assurance on the knowledge that the world is fallen and that only religion can save it. In the opening poems of his most recent book¹ Auden takes the various rooms of his Austrian house as starting-points for a series of meditations on himself, his friends and the state of civilisation. Auden's feeling for civilisation is strong (and strongly European: has he ever taken America very seriously?). He has a fine sense of architecture as what Susanne Langer has called an "ethnic domain," and he still has an eye for social trends and allegorical detail. These qualities make the book worth reading, but in the end they have more to do with essay-writing than with poetry. We are given Auden's thoughts on many matters, but almost never his experience of arriving at them, of doubting or wondering, of hoping or even of praying. Very occasionally the true voice of feeling can still be heard:

*Territory, status,
and love, sing all the birds, are what matter:
what I dared not hope or fight for
is, in my fifties, mine, a toft-and-croft
where I needn't, ever, be at home to
those I am not at home with...*

¹ *About the House*. By W. H. AUDEN. Faber, 15s.

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*In this age farms
are no longer crenellated, only cops port arms,
but the Law of the Hearth is unchanged: a
brawler may not
be put to death on the spot,
but he is asked to quit the sacral dining area
instantly, and a foul-mouth gets the cold
shoulder.*

Which probably makes him into a brawler too. Auden's dislike of naked emotion is now unusually intense, and when he tells the friends who will use his visitors' room—

*Should you have troubles (pets will die,
Lovers are always behaving badly)
And confession helps, we will hear it,
Examine and give our counsel:
If to mention them hurts too much,
We shall not be nose*

we can see how far he is from believing that the heart should be much exposed. The same self-protectiveness—or so it would seem—makes necessary the teasing, triviality and sheer cleverness that runs through so many of these poems (and also, apparently, a certain amount of what even the most eccentric of believers would have to regard as "... silliness/re the Cross..."). We have been reminded often enough that high seriousness is not the only thing in life, but there are times when we should also perhaps risk the solemnity of recalling Nietzsche's remark about a joke being an epigram on the death of a feeling. There is wisdom of a kind in this book, but there are very few riches to impoverish anyone's imagination.

THIS BUSINESS of believing has probably caused more than its fair share of poetic trouble. I. A. Richards once praised Eliot's early poetry for being severed from all belief, and the 1920s saw a good many attempts to write what one might call a poetry of pure

data. But the real point, surely, is that the beliefs (we all have them) should be visibly rooted in the poet's experience. When Wordsworth says "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" or "The world is too much with us" we know that we are going to be more interested in his mood than in his philosophy. With some of our poets of the 1930s and '40s, on the other hand, the philosophy very often comes to replace the mood altogether. Reading George Barker's *Dreams of a Summer Night*² one feels sure that his quiet air of turning his back on the modern world and on his own earlier violence is the result of having settled certain questions of belief. But the questions have been settled elsewhere, and there is a good deal of religious talk in the poems which a disbeliever can only disbelieve. There is quite a lot about the after-life:

*I saw moving in mists the recollection of friends
whom only one journey
Will ever restore to us...*

A harmless flourish, perhaps, but I would like to know what Barker really does believe about this "journey." There are several obituary poems in this book, and they all have a kind of grace and acceptance about them which seems more borrowed than earned. But when Barker gives us his own experience unmediated by any doctrine—as in these lines about a summer evening—the only thing that matters is the poetry:

*I think all birds and beasts are silent in
The hanging fires of their exhausted love.
Now shades embrace. And the small deaths
begin.*

In the "dream" poems which give this book its title there are other moments—very often moments of nostalgic recall—with something of the same directness and intensity.

How many readers of David Gascoyne's recently published *Collected Poems*³ will find as much poetry in his later meditations as in the felt experience of a poem like "A Wartime Dawn"?—

*...ash-pale
Against the cinder coloured wall, the white
Pearblossom hovers like a stare; rain-wet
The further housetops weakly shine; and there,
Beyond, hangs flaccidly a lone barrage-balloon.*

Plain cooking, some would say—but it is an experience all the same, not some kind of idea that we are being asked to have opinions about. Whether John Heath-Stubbs is still "Orthodox in beliefs as following the English Church" I am not sure, but I get the impression from his

² *Dreams of a Summer Night*. By GEORGE BARKER. Faber, 18s.

³ *Collected Poems*. By DAVID GASCOYNE. O.U.P. and André Deutsch, 30s.

*Selected Poems*⁴ that he too has become rather weary of the visible. Orthodox or not, he seems to have made up his mind about most of the important questions—if he doesn't talk about them it is perhaps because he *has* made up his mind—and it is hard not to feel that his later light verses are really epigrams on the death of his earlier romanticism:

*This is the course I'll always steer
Until the stars grow dim, sir—
That howsoever taste may veer
I'll be in the swim, sir.*

In the poetry of Miss Kathleen Raine, on the other hand, the religion has always been religious experience, and the tone of her recent book *The Hollow Hill*⁵—her first for thirteen years—is as serious as ever. The chief complaint that the unbeliever might want to make is that her poetry now seems rather bodiless. There is nothing here, he might feel, with the intensity of the poem that Miss Raine once wrote beginning:

*Full of desire I lay, the sky wounding me,
each cloud a ship without me sailing, each tree
possessing what my soul lacked, tranquillity.*

Perhaps it is tranquillity that Miss Raine has now found. There is a sense, at any rate, in which she seems to have become more reconciled to the visible and tangible world. It is not a world that she has ever seemed much at home in, and her poetry has never had a firm grasp of it, but there is a poem in this new book called "Wilderness" which may show something of how her attitude towards it has changed. It begins:

*I came too late to the hills: they were swept
bare
Winters before I was born of song and story,
Of spell or speech with power of oracle or
invocation,*

*The great ash long dead by a roofless house, its
branches rotten,
The voice of the crows an inarticulate cry,
And from the wells and springs the holy water
ebbed away....*

And ends:

*Yet I have glimpsed the bright mountain behind
the mountain,
Knowledge under the leaves, tasted the bitter
berries red,
Drunk water cold and clear from an in-
exhaustible hidden fountain.*

⁴ *Selected Poems*. By JOHN HEATH-STUBBS. Oxford, 30s.

⁵ *The Hollow Hill*. By KATHLEEN RAINE. Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d.

⁶ *The Room and other poems*. By C. DAY LEWIS. Jonathan Cape, 18s.

It is the wilderness we all know, and if this is Miss Raine's real faith it is surely one that every poet must share with her.

But the true disciple of this faith will look to poetry not for his articles of belief but for the mountain, the leaves, the berries themselves—and even, perhaps, for a bit of Yeatsian rage at the heart of the tranquillity. It is agreeable to find the first, if not the second, in some of the poems of C. Day Lewis' *The Room*⁶—in these lines about a derelict farm, for example:

*The soil, flinty at best, grew sour. Its yield
Receding left the old farm high and dry
On a ledge of the hills. Disused, the rutted field-
Track fades, like the sound of footsteps, into a
sigh
For any feet to approach this padlocked door.*

This is R. S. Thomas' kind of thoroughness, and Lewis is really much better at it than he is at light-hearted moral verses. There is nothing world-historical about this book, but the sheer effort to be precise can sometimes be enough to make us grateful.

PRECISION, that great basic principle of Imagism (not that they were the first to discover it) was the basis on which Eliot's

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whole articulation of personal emotion into poetry was built. ("The exact curve of the thing," said T. E. Hulme.) The American "projective verse" theorists who have rejected Imagism as too static—and who have disowned Eliot altogether—have only succeeded in finding yet another way of replacing imagination with talk. Few of their poems contain any images at all, and the way that they have followed Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams in their anti-symbolist war on the shaping spirit suggests that they are really more interested in America than they are in poetry. That *il miglior fabbro* has many virtues as a poet has long been clear, but we are reminded by the diffuse, medievalised lyricism of the early poems re-published in *A Lume Spento*⁷ that the ability to make significant forms out of his own emotions was never one of them. If one can somehow ignore what they actually say, there are lines in these poems where

⁷ *A Lume Spento & other early poems.* By EZRA POUND. Faber, 25s.

⁸ *Between Wars and other poems.* By ANNE HALLEY. University of Massachusetts Press, \$2.00, Oxford, 20s.

⁹ *Nonsequences.* By CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON. Longmans, 18s.

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As Olgi is 'transferred' by train from one prison to another, the whole eroded world of the long-term prisoner is displayed. Underneath this, and most sensitively but un-sentimentally realised, is the deep love for life as it can only be felt by a person who is first forced to lose it, and then in the most unlikely circumstances, gains it.
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Pound's superb later free verse can be heard faintly twitching inside the iambics:

*Or come as faint blown wind across the strings
Of this old lute of mine imaginings
And make it whisper me quaint runes and high.*

But Pound's pre-Imagist lute is so old that for the most part the interest of this collection is about as antiquarian as the subjects of most of its runes. (Stale creampuffs, says E.P. in his own disparaging Foreword of 1964.)

At some kind of opposite extreme from all this, Miss Anne Halley is an American poet whose work recalls that of Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath. Many of the poems in *Between Wars*⁸ are life studies of a Jewish family in Hitler's Germany:

Tante Tienchen

*we visited for plum cake,
an old lady on a cane, martial up the mountain,
and she said, Oh how they have humbled us.
It cannot be borne.*

*Struck her cane on the ground in 1950, 1930.
We must not give in.*

These poems have none of those moments that Lowell so often gives us where everything suddenly fuses into a riveting image—and in many ways Nazism could be a promising enough subject from that point of view—but there is a directness and honesty of feeling in the best of them which few of today's more technically obsessed American poets seem interested in trying to achieve.

BUT HOW MANY poets are there who can do what Lowell has done? In England we have not yet succumbed *en masse* to the forces of projectivism, but one of the reasons why I find Christopher Middleton's latest book disappointing is that he seems determined not to be obvious about his own emotions or to let himself be caught with his technical guard down. *Nonsequences*⁹ (sub-titled *Selfpoems*) contains some lines which are impressive in a slightly odd way, particularly in a poem called "Sketch of the old graveyard at Col de Castillon":

*The things one imagines of the dead,
who cannot see: broom like green porcupines,
and, higher, the crab-apple tree; cold shrapnel
on the abandoned terraces; the one rose
meandering in through a wire octagon;
and cannot hear the immense murmur now,
floating behind the silence in the air.*

But when Middleton describes a cat killing a mouse he adopts a remote and clinical diction which seems more than a little perverse:

*He has applied
a reserved gram of tooth power,
to raise this gibbering curt squeal
at last, and now glassily gazes down.*

This distancing from the violence is presumably some kind of *Entfremdungseffekt*, and to a degree I think it works. The "reserved gram of tooth power" does at least connect the violence with the modern world of machinery and science. But it is the kind of effect that can only work once or twice, because it must always—or so one hopes—be parasitic on a more human and empathetic response. (Or even—which is perhaps the heart of the matter—on an *inhuman* and empathetic response.) The poems in *Nonsequences* run through a whole range of different styles, and the main thing that links them together is this avoidance of any direct self-expression. I think Middleton believes that modern poetry ought to be difficult, but why, and whence, this elaborate programme of self-concealment? Is this too a reaction against the Germans? Or another uneasiness about an earlier romanticism? It seems to me that Middleton is in danger (and we shall all suffer for it) of becoming some kind of mystique-beshrouded anti-poet, and before it is too late I would like to invite him to begin his next book with a simple straightforward modern lyric that we can all understand—the essence, surely, of nonsequential self-poetry?

IN HIS ESSAY ON "Rilke and Nietzsche, with a Discourse on Thought, Belief and Poetry," Erich Heller says at one point that

Rilke is the poet of a world of which the philosopher is Nietzsche. Its formations evade all traditional systems of cartography. Doubt has dislodged all certainties. The unnameable is christened and the unsayable uttered. It is a world in which the order of correspondence is violently disturbed. We can no longer be sure that we love the lovable and abhor the detestable. . . .

And he goes on, here and elsewhere, to suggest that the Romantic-Symbolist road is a mistaken one, and that we must find some way to retrace our steps. But what is this world that Heller describes except the very world in which we live? Heller is one of a great line of traditional critics—Eliot was another—who have claimed to know what is lovable and what is detestable without the help of poetry itself. He has, it seems, a system of cartography on which he can still rely—though he has never quite told us what it is. But the answer to Heller and to the other leaders of this new unholy alliance of civic-mindedness and unsplilt religion was given by Walter Kaufmann in an essay on "Art, Tradition and Truth," when he said:

The piety of the poet consists in a reverence not for tradition but for experience. . . . In Nietzsche's words: the creator breaks the old tablets. What Heller considers an objection is

really nothing less than a criterion of great poetry: "The unnameable is christened and the unsayable uttered."

If our poets will not christen the unnameable and utter the unsayable, who—unless a new generation of inspired dictators—will? When Eliot took his leave of liberal humanism it was with an epigraph from *Heart of Darkness*: "Mistah Kurtz—he dead." But Mr. Kurtz is not dead, and if we are prepared to take a closer look at him in our poetry there may be hope for us yet.

Tragedy & Revolution

Modern Tragedy. By RAYMOND WILLIAMS.
Chatto and Windus, 30s.

RAYMOND WILLIAMS has long occupied himself with modern tragedy and with modern revolution, and it has been borne in upon him that these are not disparate interests but grow from the same root; the present book is accordingly the meditation of a tragic revolutionist. It is a strange work, deeply personal but drily argumentative, eschewing "rhetoric"—Williams' word for writing which too obviously seeks to move or please the reader—yet in its own way heavy-eyed, mandarin to the point of perversity. There is a somewhat similar paradox in the design of the book, for the three parts do not belong to a scheme intended to give the reader a "rhetorically" easy entrance to the argument, but reflect preoccupations and commitments that remain partly private; so that the oddness of the book's structure seems finally to be self-indulgent, however strongly the general tone of sullen, incorruptible intelligence may seem to tell against such a judgment. At its best this tone, as one recognised it in *Culture and Society*, and, duly modulated, in *Border Country*, seemed an accurate expression of Williams' powerful and somewhat austere mind. This book is in one way a learned argument, like the first of these, and in another a work of imagination like the second, but the manner has certainly grown at once more severe and more selfish; and there is an evident loss of imaginative, if not of intellectual quality.

The three sections are: first, an historical account of tragedy culminating in an attempt to integrate modern tragedy with what the author means by "the long revolution"; second, a study (or rather a loosely linked series of studies, many of them rather sketchy and some inessential) of modern tragic literature, from *Anna Karenina* to Harold Pinter; and finally

a tragedy on revolutionary themes, entitled *Koba*. Mr. Williams discusses this arrangement in his preface, explaining that it was due to his wish "to get a whole structure of feeling into one book." The book is, he affirms, "about the connections, in modern tragedy, between event and experience and idea," and the form is "designed at once to explore and to emphasise these radical connections." I doubt if it will feel like a work of such ambitious unity to anyone but the author.

Perhaps because he sees how private are the forces integrating his book, Williams begins the argument with a page or so about himself, though the personal explanations are brief and highly refracted by the prose. His kind of tragedy, he says, is not the deaths of princes, but what he has met with in "an ordinary and private death... a terrifying loss of connection between father and son [*Border Country*]." This dissociation reflected a social and historical fact, "the loss of humanity imposed by our society at every level from this of the individual to that of classes and institutions... I have seen the loss of connection built into a works and a city, and men and women broken by... the deferment and corrosion of hope and desire"—and so on to war and social revolution. This, anywhere along the scale from the family to the warring state, is tragedy as we know it in modern experience. Here is the best writing in the book; only here is the word "I," though heavily muffled, allowed to make its necessary appearance. For a moment it seems possible to believe that the book we are to read will in fact derive its strength from its genuine connection with a life-work in history of ideas, criticism, and fiction. But this impulse is soon overlaid by a programme which is not so much a "structure of feeling" as the establishment of "connections... between event and experience and idea." The colours fade, self-conscious severity supervenes.

FOR ALL THAT, the first section is much the best of the three. It begins by explaining acceptably, though laboriously, that we ought not to cavil at the people who say that car-crashes, social inequality, and war are "tragic" simply because pedants and aesthetes regard this as an improper usage. There is, one would think, no great mystery about this reluctance of the clerisy to see the headline use of the word made standard. Tragedy used to mean something sung, acted or recited, and was no more applicable to a suicide pact or an accident than "sonnet" to a love affair. It was "a dote of a prosperity for a time that endeth in wretchedness"; but, according to the *O.E.D.*, the word was veering towards the modern usage pretty early, as in 1617 a commentator could say that the Hungarian war "made all those parts full of tragedies and misery," which almost gets up to date. These developments often offend the educated, who call them vulgar, but they happen nevertheless, and one of the weaknesses of Williams is that he will not allow an issue of this kind to be merely semantic. It seems very far-fetched to argue that the hapless pedants are animated by a contempt for ordinary people who deplore human waste. In any case the present century has heard so much about the tragic sense of life and so forth that the most reactionary of the purists has got used to the extension of the senses of the word. This being so, I find it hard to understand why Williams could conduct his operation as if the important task was to bring together the idea and the experience of tragedy, as if bourgeois thought had arbitrarily divided them. But he chooses to do it that way, and to begin with an historical survey of the concept of tragedy which would explain the end and the separation.

This survey, as the author well knows, is an extremely dangerous undertaking, and the surprising thing is not that it is unconvincing but that it is never ridiculous. Classical and medieval tragedy gets seven pages, Renaissance tragedy two, and so on. (Some of the material is more expansively treated in the second part of the book.) Greek tragedy, which we have persistently distorted because of anachronistic notions of the tragic hero, was a collective experience; medieval tragedy consisted of stories about Fortune which excluded the people and so reflected feudal alienation; Renaissance tragedy carried on this narrow exemplarity but added a critical interest (why can suffering seem pleasant?). In neo-classic tragedy secularisation brings on a bourgeois individualism; thenceforth tragedy tends to grow more and more private, with isolate heroes variously coloured by Hegelian metaphysics, Marxist world history, Schopenhauerian pessimism, and

CROSS-CULTURAL NUDES

The 'sacred or profane' dilemma presupposes a deterministic dichotomy in cultural mores which many find to be unconfirmed by the experience of living; that the female nude in illustration can provide an aesthetic link between the disciplines is part of the visual semantic of Jean Straker's photographic art.



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Nietzschean anti-intellectualism. Now that the sanction of some order beyond the human is more or less inoperative we tend to suppose that in an absurd universe there are only accidents, that there is no order which suffering can reflect or restore. But this absurdism is too easy, and we should reflect that all the best tragedy belongs to periods of deep ideological disturbance and tension, such as our own.

At this point one has already wanted to ask many questions concerning apparent exceptions. If we really wanted to study the tragic sense of the middle ages, should we look at the metrical tragedies? Wouldn't it make sense to look at architecture and glass, at the great apocalypses, at the tragic millenarianism described by Norman Cohn? Isn't it rash, even for the sake of so vast an argument, to assume that all Renaissance tragic heroes are much alike, and dismiss the grand stoic individualism of, say, Bussy D'Ambois as a kind of very early warning of an alienating "liberal tragedy"? What has Bussy's last speech to do with tensions between feudal and bourgeois individualism? It is much closer to the tragic sense of life as it was understood earlier in this century; it is metaphysical, "post-Hegelian." What gets lost in surveys of this sort is precisely the content of particular tragedies. It is less easy than Williams here pretends to relate our fictions of action or suffering to a systematic revolutionary view of history.

THE ARGUMENT of this book, however, seems to be that the kind of point I've just made is always an indication of some kind of historical or critical failure, of a confusion which Mr. Williams relates to the false liberal idea of revolution. To this false idea he gives most of the blame for the alienating modern muddle about tragedy, for not only does it encourage positive political myths of the sort cultivated in the modern West, but also, by reaction, produces a dangerous and equally alienating nihilism, currently manifested in the Absurd. These denials of revolution are also denials of tragedy. What we should have learned from modern history is that revolution is, in fact, tragedy, "the inevitable working through of a deep and tragic disorder.... I see revolution in a tragic perspective"—that is to say, creating its own alienation, enjoining suffering for the sake of life. Early Marx is quoted in support of the view that the redemption of humanity necessarily entails prolonged and tragic suffering, that only through suffering can disorder be converted to order. While the long revolution is in progress, the future is entirely tragic, on a view of tragedy that associates it not only with disorder—actual, inescapable in-

justice and suffering—but also with order, that remote redemption. In the West we pretend not to understand this, but in the East they understand very well that the revolution against alienation is itself tragically alienating, and this is the source of pity and terror, of sacrifice, of ideas of order paradoxically illuminated by and realised through an accepted disorder. Thus the cost of an understanding of modern tragedy is an understanding of modern revolution. This, one gathers, had better be Pasternak's than Stalin's, but the implication seems to be that Stalin's was better than anything we can manage.

From all this it will be clear that Mr. Williams cannot countenance much that passes for tragedy, or anti-tragedy, in the modern theatre, and in the second part of his book he does a good deal of somewhat doctrinaire knocking. Some writers come well out of this—the late though not the early Brecht, the Beckett of *Godot*, Pasternak. There is a longish section on Albert Camus as "tragic humanist," admiring but "limiting," in which a lot of the argument is done in terms of the disagreement with Sartre. (Sartre, it seems, can be adequately treated without a single reference to *La Nausée* or *L'Être et le néant*.) The pieces accumulated in this section seem uniformly inferior to most of the first, though the argument runs parallel: the history of tragedy, most visibly in modern tragedy, reflects the alienation which the long revolution, itself a tragic manifestation, must end.

I HAVE SAID nothing, and intend to say very little, about Mr. Williams' tragedy, *Koba*. It is about revolution, and its central figure is a kind of Stalin, agent not only of the revolution's first success, but of its own subsequent tragic alienations. So one sees the play's relation to the other parts of the book; in fact it could have been printed with the first part alone as a kind of Shavian preface to it. Unfortunately it is disastrously bad; carrying tragedy back into the theatre, Mr. Williams makes it really absurd, low-spirited theatrical rant, chocolate revolutionary posturing. In his preface the author gives us leave to use only some parts of the book if others displease or fail to interest us, and for me this leaves the first hundred pages. But even these are to my mind dispensable. It is a comfort that even if one takes a little more liberty than was offered and does without the whole book, there are still those earlier works to learn from, books in which the equations to be solved were of more general interest, less a matter of a personally satisfying "structure of feeling."

Frank Kermode

AUTHORS & CRITICS

Are the Javanese Mad?

OTHER TRAVELLERS to Indonesia, unable to penetrate beyond "the touristic high-spots of Java and Bali" return with a standard story—economic decline, Presidential bombast, and run-away nationalism—which, though not exactly wrong, misses the essence of the situation. But Herbert Luethy, by means he never reveals to us, has somehow escaped this fate, and reaching boldly out beyond "the artificial paradise of the Hotel Indonesia," has got to the foundations of things. And what he has found (as those who remain huddled in that excursionist's preserve have probably all along suspected) is madness: "a collective psychosis controlled by a charismatic leader."

It is not, however, a pervasive madness. The Outer Islanders (Sumatrans, Borneans, etc.) are "of the same ilk, mentally and ethnically" as the neighbouring Malaysians: realistic, rational, restrained, their "great names" (Sjahrir, Hatta, etc.) "serious and efficient statesmen." It is only the Javanese who have gone collectively *amok*. Not only have they spawned Sukarno—"this magician born of a Javanese school teacher and a Balinese woman." They have also so impressed, and in ersatz form, their "accumulated traditions of... mystical syncretism" upon the society generally that today "*the whole*" (*italics mine, and irresistible*) "of Indonesian politics consists of magical processes derived from Javanese cosmogony." It is a "touristic commonplace" to say that Java is a land of magic; but it is a true commonplace. Tourists see deeper than anyone knows, and we need not have left the Hotel Indonesia after all.

The *idée-force* behind this, to say the least, remarkable view of things is a thesis which has become something of a trademark with Luethy: the natural superiority of federalism. "The history of the Indonesian Republic," he says in his opening paragraphs, "is the history of the failure of federalism and most of its problems are the result of this failure." And, whether or not the echo of Marx's famous (and equally implausible) summary of world history and the class struggle is intentional or not, the remainder of his essay is essentially dedicated to establishing this proposition and drawing the appropriate moral. The federal system which "seemed to be called for in the nature of things" after Independence was discredited by Dutch

CLIFFORD GEERTZ lived for several years in Java and Bali. He is the author of *The Religion of Java* (1960) and editor of *Old Societies and New States* (1963), and is now Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago.

attempts to exploit local particularisms for their own interests, by the elections of 1955 which revealed the strictly regional character of the parties, and by a series of regional revolts against Djakarta whose main fault seems to have been that they were unco-ordinated. Centralisation under "Sukarno's Javanese empire" followed. What followed that was a synthetic political union with a synthetic culture and a synthetic language to which all the traditional cultures of the archipelago have been progressively sacrificed. The ethnic Javanese, with nearly half the country's population and a "physical need to rule," consume the country's substance and return nothing to the whole but a "locust swarm" of teachers, civil servants, and military officials to preach political mysticism and disrupt the economy. Whatever hope is left lies in the fact that the unity *is* synthetic and that Sukarnoism is creating a sort of artificial desert "from beneath which, perhaps, new blossoms will one day emerge"—*i.e.*, a society and a polity in which the Javanese will be free to elaborate their "decadent, High Rococo" civilisation and the more reasonable groups of the Outer Archipelago "their open relationship with the outside world, which is the peculiar gift of maritime peoples."

FACED WITH SUCH a vision, I am in some danger, in undertaking to question it, of being taken for an apologist for the régime and for the by now thoroughly bankrupt demagogue who (at least as I write this) heads it. Luethy is, of course, not wrong in his judgment that Indonesia is in terrible shape and that its leader-hero has feet of clay.¹

¹He is, however, wrong about a number of things. And as the corpus of error concerning Indonesia is already sufficiently developed, a few of his more glaring misstatements ought to be mentioned. (1) It is not true that *sawah* (terraced wet-rice agriculture) exists "nowhere else but in the central and eastern areas of Java... and in Bali." (2) The role of the Islamic reform movements in the struggle for Independence, though important, was not "pre-eminent." (Such a view dismisses not only the PNI, the PKI and Murba, but Sukarno, Sjahrir, Tjokroaminoto and Tan Malaka.) (3) The view that the *wajang* puppet play "faithfully perpetuates all the refinements and marvels of court ritual and sacred kingship" leaves wholly out of account the central role of the clowns, one of whose functions at least is to frame a populist criticism of those very refinements and marvels. (4) The generalisation that Javanese society produces "politicians, lawyers, intellectuals, seers and mystics, but never merchants, *entrepreneurs* or organisers" is as true as the generalisation that Switzerland produces merchants, *entrepreneurs* and organisers, but never politicians, lawyers, intellectuals, seers... (5) That Islam has no important effect on Javanese culture and that knowledge of Quranic doctrine is limited "to a few professionals" is a judgment only thoroughgoing ignorance of the realities of Javanese religious life could produce. (6) The Javanese language is very far from "disappearing altogether" in the "Indonesianised" cities of Java. (7) Calling the 1958-62 insurrec-

Others have said all that, and said it better. Few except the specially motivated have had many good words to offer for Sukarno's Indonesia since 1957, for there have not been many good words to offer. On the contrary, reciting the failures of Indonesia has become something of an intellectual's sport in the West; here, anyway, is one new state atrociously enough run to dispraise without much risk of being damned as a "colonialist." The question is not whether Indonesia is at the end of its

tions "Moslem" seems odd when many of the leading roles were played by Christians and non-Communist Marxist secularists. (8) To say that Indonesia is "on the whole rather under-populated," is a breathtaking, completely misleading over-simplification of one of the world's most complex demographic pictures. (9) Masjumi was indeed the strongest party in the Outer Islands, but as about thirty per cent of its total vote and a very important element of its leadership came from east and central Java, I wouldn't quite call it "non-Javanese." (10) The Marx-Wittfogel-Cecil B. DeMille image of the Javanese past as consisting of "pharaonic" kings with absolute power is not one most modern historical work on the Indic period would support. (11) And finally, though it is far too complex a subject to tackle here, to represent the Indonesian language (*bahasa Indonesia*) as a "structurally fluid" esperanto constructed out of a pidgin is the grossest sort of caricature.

These remarks are admittedly *ex-cathedra* and, as I am not a bishop, need not be accepted uncritically either. I make them only to raise the suspicion that Luethy's grasp of the Indonesian scene may be much less sure than the sweep of his rhetoric might lead one to believe.

² My point is not that this sort of *Weltanschauung* does not exist in Java, at least in certain classes, and that it has not had its political effects. It is that the argument that the history of the Republic is a mere "expression," a political acting out, of such a *Weltanschauung*—of "irrationality laid down as a principle"—is a theory worthy of that "lamented court bard," Muhammad Yamin himself.

The fact that this most unbuttoned of the "Javanist" ideologues was—like the grand-daddy of the *Manipol-Usdek* style of ideologising, Sukarno's political enemy and intellectual model, Tan Malaka—a Sumatran from the same group as the "serious and efficient" Sjahrir and Hatta—poses something of a puzzle for Luethy's homemade *volkspychologie*.

So does the fact that two of the most formidable opponents of ideological unreason before the 1958 *débâcle* were the brilliant economist Sumitro, who coming from a high-gentry court-centre background, could hardly have been more *echt-Javanese*, and that last of Java's divine kings, the Sultan of Jogjakarta. Yamin is parenthetically explained away as a convert to Javanism and "consequently, all the more fervent"; Sumitro's ethnicity is passed over in silence; and the Sultan, who may yet turn out to be Sukarno's successor, is—like Tan Malaka—ignored altogether.

The relations among religion, politics, and psychology, which are what is at issue here, are simply more complicated than Luethy imagines.

tether. Even Sukarno, who, like Nietzsche, claims to have looked into the abyss and had the abyss look back, has admitted that. The question is, has Luethy really found out how and why it got there, and is the remedy consequently implied reliable? I think not. The Javanese are not bewitched by the past but bewildered by the present. And, given the nature of that present, federalism is a dubious prescription indeed for Indonesia.

It is true that the ideological doctrines of today's Indonesia are built in great part (though hardly entirely) out of traditional materials, and especially Javanese materials. But it is not the inherent irrationality of those materials nor of the culture from which they come, "the demons and phantoms of the Javanese past," that has brought on the *Manipol-Nasakom-Usdek-Unefo* ideological chain reaction. The earlier formulations in this *genre*, particularly the *Pantja Sila* (Five Principles) statement were rather well-constructed, if only one grants that a new state, born rather sooner and more suddenly than anyone dreamed out of the ashes of a ruinous Japanese occupation needs some ideological guidance, some conception, however vague and rhetorical, of how it came to be, what it is, and where it is headed if it is going to be able to act at all.

The *Pantja Sila* (first outlined as the Occupation tottered) was perhaps no great contribution to political thought. But by providing something for all the major political elements in the society—Muslims ("monotheism"), Mazzinian patriots ("nationalism"), Westernisers ("democracy"), high-minded literati ("humanitarianism"), and radicals ("social welfare")—and making the whole intellectually accessible to the peasantry through the *gotong-rojong* image, it was designed to be an ideological ground upon which all the about-to-be-created Indonesians might stand and upon which a parliamentary system could consequently be founded. The Declaration of the Rights of Man may have been more elegant, the American Declaration of Independence more subtle, and the Communist Manifesto more eloquent—at least in Western eyes. But as a philosophical foundation for a new political order, which is after all what the small, poorly trained, terribly insecure Republican élite was faced with creating, the *Pantja Sila* was not quite so ridiculous as, looking back at it through the desperate inanities of *Re-So-Pim* and *Tahun Vivere Pericoloso*, Luethy (who seems to have the same distaste for symbols that Sukarno has for figures) would have us believe.

IN THE EVENT, however, it did fail. Rather than standing on it the parties trampled on it, and the parliamentary system foundered. The reasons for this are extremely complex and only partly understood. But that they lie more in the fact that the enormous problems with which the élite were faced proved too much for them than in "a way of thinking deeply rooted in the magical universe of Java" ("contempt" for material realities, "aristocratic indifference" to economics, an "unshakeable faith" in the magic of words and gestures, etc.) seems to me undeniable.³

These problems can be divided into two main classes: those which were inherent in Indonesia's situation as such—her demographic structure, her "dualistic" economy, her ethnic multiplicity, and so on; and those more accidental to the period—the long drawn-out, miserably handled New Guinea crisis, the existence of a very large Communist Party, the growth of Chinese national power, the physical decline of Sukarno, and so on. Together, they were simply too much for the élite to handle, and the retreat to cultural revivalism, racial scapegoating, and the manufacture of external enemies is a result of the panic induced by *that* failure, *not* by any archaic memories of the world of the Mahabharata. If we are going to be depth-psychological, let us at least be Freudian not Jungian. Unreason erupts when mastery fails; it does not rise like chthonian vapour out of a collective unconscious.

The question about federalism is thus not whether it is a Good Thing but whether its institution, or rather re-institution, would increase or decrease the governability of a country rather less tractable than Switzerland. There is no apparent way by which a federal system could be designed so as to mute rather than accentuate the social, economic, and cultural divisions of Indonesia, which no one, except perhaps now Peking, would regard as being in any need of deepening. An attempt, therefore, to create such a system, either formally or by a mere *de facto* abandonment of the "one nation, one country, one language" commitment of which Luethy seems to think so little, would, by making the country even less manageable than it is, lead only to a failure of nerve even more thoroughgoing and more difficult to reverse than that which has brought on the present chaos. It would lead not to an outburst of political realism, but to a destruction of whatever scraps of that "moderate and general feeling for the whole" (in Edward Shils' phrase) called "civility" which have somehow managed to survive the ecstasies and horrors of the last decade. Cultural pluralism, administrative decentralisation, and economic diversification are indeed essential aspects of any Indonesian synthesis which hopes to endure. But it is doubtful in the extreme that a divorce between the building of a nation and the construction of a state (which is what Luethy's let-the-flowers-bloom, contain-the-Javanese, and unleash-the-Sumatrans prescription seems to come down to) will move any of them closer to realisation. The outcome of such a policy would be neither a state nor a nation, but, to use a lovely image Sjafruddin once applied to Masjumi, an elephant with *beri-beri*.

OF COURSE Luethy could say, and he would be right, that this is what exists now. But the point is whether the road back (if there is a road back) to at least a one-cheer democracy is to be found in the putting aside of the attempt to "forge a national consciousness," however 19th-century that may sound, for the will-o'-the-wisp of cultural particularism and regional autonomy. The Outer Islands *do* have to carry Java; the Javanese *are* inevitably going to play the axial role in any political system;

Indonesians *must* seek to subordinate their primordial identifications to some larger, culturally much less vivid, civil whole. At least they must if Indonesia is to exist at all.

The post-Independence impulse to centralisation, which, with its notion of dual (Sukarno-Hatta) leadership and its rallying to the *Pantja Sila*, was also an impulse to parliamentarianism, was sound. But, though supported and led by some of the "serious and efficient" Outer Island men Luethy (quite rightly) so admires, the movement which replaced the federal United States of Indonesia by the unitary Republic sprang not from a conviction that Javanese were mad but the hope that Indonesians could be sane.

A hundred thousand dead, I admit, casts something of a shadow across such a hope. Perhaps it is true (though I do not myself believe it) that in the case of "enchanted Java" to understand all is to condemn all. But future tourists might still keep in mind that, even on this uncertain assumption, they still have a right to only so much condemnation as they have understanding.

Clifford Geertz

Luethy's Reply

THE SCORNFUL VEHEMENCE of Dr. Geertz' "confrontation" seems to point to reasons much deeper than the mere indignation of a long-standing specialist witnessing the frivolous intrusion of an outsider into his garden. He is an expert in "integrative revolution" (or "nation-building") in the Afro-Asian world. Though as long ago as 1963 he declared Indonesia to be "an almost classical case of integrative failure," and saw in all its "astounding wealth of ideological and institutional experiments... but a desperately-laid smoke-screen behind which to hide a growing conviction of impending political catastrophe" (Geertz, *Old Societies and New States*, pp. 131-133), he is deeply hurt by the idea that there might have been something basically wrong in the whole concept of a one and indivisible Indonesian nation—something other, at least, than the wretchedness of the "now thoroughly bankrupt demagogue" who, mysteriously enough, came to embody this otherwise sound national revolution.

I was rather less severe when I presented Indonesia as "a unique example of 'nationalisation' consciously conceived and realised," and I am less ready to heap all the sins of this nation-building *furia* exclusively on President Sukarno's head. His rise to the top, and the elimination of all the other more "rational" or more "moderate" leaders, brought about with remarkably little violence, appears to me to have resulted from a process of natural selection of the fittest popular leader ("demagogue" means just this). I hope we agree at least on this: the problem created by the bewildering necessity for (or ambition of) the nationalist leadership of Indonesia, as of so many "new States," to build up a unified nation behind their nationalism, *i.e.*, to infuse a powerful sense of

common will and loyalty into a cluster of heterogeneous primary groups more or less accidentally assembled within the framework of a foreign-built administrative unit.¹

Such "fusions of the souls" out of disparate materials have hardly ever taken place (even under better, less artificial circumstances) without demagoguery, self-intoxication, sound and fury; without a mobilisation of irrational instincts and passions, fabrication of synthetic rites, symbols, and slogans, of revivalist myths, collective megalomaniacs, demonisation of real or invented interior and exterior enemies, hunting-down of resisting particularisms, and all the pandemonium of the nationalist melting-pot. The job of heating this pot could hardly be done by "reasonable," responsible, and dispassionate statesmen.

Dr. Geertz seems to view this integrating process with anguished enthusiasm, as something which *has* to succeed at all costs "if Indonesia is to exist at all" (a beautiful example of argument in a circle), only deploring its excesses and irrationalities due to fortuitous and partly mysterious circumstances. I myself start from other not very remote European experiences in this nationalisation of man, and I admit my lack of enthusiasm for an inherently pathological phase of social life. It is a fascinating matter for analysis, but on the historical necessity and ultimate healthiness of which for every part and parcel of mankind I refrain from pronouncing. As I stated strongly at the very outset of my ENCOUNTER article, all the recipes and ingredients of the nationalist pandemonium have been elaborated in Europe. "Indonesia is no exception, but simply an extreme case," and only "the exotic transposition of (our) myths and magic formulas prevents us from recognising the old familiar face of *l'Europe des patries*." My case, then, was not that "the Javanese are mad," nor even that Sukarno is mad (Europe has seen more insane nationalist leaders), but that Indonesia's political body is going through a pathological phase which ought to be familiar to the social historian if he were able to recognise its expressions in the context of a very closed and original foreign world (and, incompetently enough, I tried to recognise some of these). Nor did I pronounce any condemnations, nor propose any panacea for Indonesia's ills. My federalist "trademark" is entirely of Dr. Geertz' invention; and though I admit much sympathy with every form of local self-government, the first sub-title of my piece was "The Impossible Federation." This makes most of our polemic pointless. The Indonesians will have to find their own way of living together without necessarily "crushing" their neighbours. I see no need to quarrel about what we think they should do or ought to have done; at any rate they do not expect our advice.

¹ Without the historical accident, entirely due to forces foreign to the area, of Spanish, Dutch, British and American colonial administration, the "Malaysian" region of South-East Asia might have grown together into what is now the dream of *Maphilindo*, or might have developed into a constellation of states entirely different from what exists now.

BUT THEN LET ME CONFESS two things which I thought to be obvious:

1. I have tried indeed to do exactly what Dr. Geertz finds unbearable: to describe the history of Sukarno's republic as an "unfolding," "a mere expression, or a political acting out, of the Javanese *Weltanschauung*" confronted with the problem of "national identity." I found that this exercise made more sense and produced a more coherent view of the régime's internal and external behaviour than a mere listing of "objective" facts, figures, events and problems resulting in the more scholarly, but unhelpful conclusion that all this is "extremely complex and only partly understood." It is complex beyond imagination. But sometimes, just experimentally, we should try to reduce complicated things to a reasonably simplified model and to see how far this works to explain an apparently incoherent state of things: if only to give occasion to the specialists to state indignantly that everything is "more complicated than Luethy imagines." It is clear, if we hear or read the utterings of the present Indonesian leaders, that they are reasoning in ways quite different from ours, that they are busy with problems of their own making quite different from what *we* think to be Indonesia's problems. Their sayings and doings bear very little relationship to the outside world (but very much to their original image of the outside world). So we may as well stop reasoning in *our* way to explain *their* doings, and try to understand them in their own terms. I know only too well how formidable is the double difficulty—and how ill-equipped I am to overcome it—first to understand at all their ways of reasoning, and secondly to translate this even approximately in terms which have a meaning for us. I may have failed miserably in this, but I still think it worth trying. To believe that Indonesian politics can be understood independently of a spiritual and cultural heritage which is so overwhelmingly, and even obsessively, present in the exclusive search self-affirmation and "identity" of its nationalism, and to say that "the Javanese are not bewitched by the past but bewildered by the present," as if the two could be separated, betrays a view of the relationship between past and present which, though widespread among sociologists, seems to me utterly sterile.

2. My piece never pretended to be an exhaustive treatise on Indonesian history, ethnology, sociology, politics, and administration. Though still rather lengthy, its only aim was to systematise the one dominant obsession of Sukarno's Indonesia, and in this sense it was indeed a caricature, stressing, isolating, and thereby amplifying only those features which I found symptomatic and relevant to my purpose—including its irrationalism and its often cruel comic-opera aspects. I left out of the picture many qualifications, exceptions, question-marks, and hints to the obviously much greater "complexity of things." I did not even resist the temptation to write satirically where only satire seemed adequate. There is a way of keeping solemn in the face of ruling maniacs I find ridiculous. Furthermore, I felt entitled to suppose most ENCOUNTER readers know without incessant reminders that all generalisations about "the" Sumatrans, Javanese,

Cretans, Americans, or Swiss (as Dr. Geertz rightly reminds me) are complete fallacies if taken literally, and that individuals never fit neatly into categories. Not all Sumatrans (a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups!) are Moslem puritans, and quite a number of Javanese are; but not even Dr. Geertz can always avoid in his writings the stereotypes of "the Javanese mystic" and "the Sumatran puritan" which are unavoidable if we try to typologise at all. Once the typologisation is made, we can indulge in refuting it with contradicting cases. This is an old game which keeps controversy going. Still, the contrary evidence needs careful examination if it is to enrich and not only to confuse our knowledge. Take Tan Malaka. He was certainly an erratic politician, but I cannot help wondering why, as a Marxist intellectual, he is held in such contempt by Dr. Geertz and other Western experts. If the title of his *Madilog* may justify his classification as "the grand-daddy of the *Manipol-Usdek* style of ideologising," the content of his work is the exact opposite: a desperate but deeply serious attempt to oppose a radically rational humanism to the pervading cosmological mysticism of Javanese tradition—probably the most sophisticated and outspoken challenge ever made inside Indonesia to the "chthonian vapours" on which Sukarnoism thrives. I will not triumphantly pretend that the Sumatran Tan Malaka proves my "home-made *Volkspsychologie*." But he certainly does not contradict it. He, too, is more complicated than Mr. Geertz suggests—and Yamin, this thoroughly genial dilettante, is also much more complicated than my passing remarks could convey. As I was not writing a biographical dictionary, I "ignored" Tan Malaka, Sumitro, Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX (whose eventual succession to Sukarno's throne, hopefully hinted at by Dr. Geertz, would so beautifully fall in with my ignorant personal picture of Indonesian politics that I hardly dare believe it), and many other remarkable people. What is the use of dropping names without analysing in each case the complex personalities behind them?

IF I HAD NOW TO GO point by point through Dr. Geertz' smashing *Syllabus errorum*, my letter would have to become ten times as long as his.

Some of his items rightly point to caricatural excesses and short-cuts in my crude summary of a most intricate subject. Malay is *not* and has never been a pidgin, though *bahasa Sukarno* tends to become an esperanto. Islam *has* had an evident impact on Javanese culture, though a strange and wayward one. The Marx-Wittfogel-Tan Malaka version of the Javanese past—and the archaeological evidence of the enormous god-kings' mausoleums of the Prambanan group—is contradicted by Yamin's version and by the presence of bantering clowns in the *wayang* plays; but which version "most modern historical work on the Indic period would support" is far from clear, as the leading scholars in this field are vigorously divided over the reading and understanding of the Old Javanese chronicles as magic texts (Berg) or as historical records (de Graaf), and even over much of their literal meaning. And if, inside Indonesia, large and compact societies founded on *sawah* culture are the exclusive characteristics of Java and Bali, smaller spots of this type of rice culture are scattered over most of South-East Asia, and every schoolboy knows that the most stupendous development of *sawah* is to be found in the northern Philippines.

Some other items of the *Syllabus* are trifling or hair-splitting. (If Indonesia's demography is very complicated, the global opposition between over-packed Java—51,000 sq. miles, about 65 million inhabitants—and the whole "rest"—685,000 sq. miles, hardly 40 million inhabitants—is glaringly simple. The key role of Islamic movements at the very beginning of "modern" Indonesian nationalism, and the role of Masjumi as major spokesman for the "Outer Islands," are hardly disputed: like the clowns in the *wayang*, these seem to be here just to make good measure.) Most of it boils down to the utterly correct but sometimes tedious statement that "it is all much more complicated." I am deeply conscious of this, as I am deeply conscious that Dr. Geertz is an eminent specialist of the subject while I am not, that he has spent more years in Indonesia than I have spent months, and that he can speak *ex cathedra* while I can only propose tentative suggestions. I hope this will sooth his anger.

Herbert Luethy

LETTERS

Butler & 1944

In the June ENCOUNTER Lord Annan in an article "End of an Elite?" makes reference to the Education Act of 1944. He says, "...so far from being a new deal, it seems now to be the final stage of the consciously inegalitarian educational system bequeathed by the Victorians."

In all the years since I piloted this Act through Parliament I have never heard it described in this way. The Act never laid down any fixed system of secondary education and in fact envisaged the possibility of multilateral schools, all under the initiative and control of Local Education Authorities.

Had the Act been so narrow as Lord Annan wrongly suggests, new legislation would be necessary before the present experiments in secondary education could be carried out. The Act was passed by an all-Party Government and I was much aided by Mr. Chuter Ede, Mr. Arthur Greenwood and Mr. Attlee, who cannot really be regarded as inegalitarian.

It seems a pity in this present year of grace that apologists for the modern comprehensive system, imposed from the centre, should be so enthusiastic over one doctrine that they forget and misrepresent the atmosphere in which a great step forward for secondary education for all was conceived.

BUTLER

*The Master's Lodge,
Trinity College, Cambridge*

I INTENDED no discourtesy to Lord Butler. He was one of the few pre-1950 politicians who cared deeply about education, and he has every right to be proud of the Act that will always be associated with his name. But the fruits of the Act were not all desirable and perpetuated social and educational divisions which many people today want to try to reduce. Where I suspect I differ from Lord Butler is that I do not regard the present hierarchies of schools as immutable.

ANNAN

*The Provost's Lodge,
King's College, Cambridge*

The Literary Intellectual

IT DESOLATES me to discover that an editorial of mine, in *The Public Interest*, provoked "a certain sense of gloom and despondency" in your columnist, R. I intended no such mischief, I assure you. And I do think that if R. had more firmly grasped my meaning—or, let us say, if I had expressed myself more lucidly—this calamity might have been averted.

The problem I was addressing myself to was two-

fold. First, there is the fact that those intellectuals who are, in some sense, "experts" or "professionals"—such as economists, educationists, city planners, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers, and so on—are playing an ever more significant role in the shaping of public policy in the United States. I take it that R. does not dispute this fact. And I cannot imagine why it should sadden him. If it does—the precise source of his melancholia is unclear to me.

Secondly, there is the fact that American "literary intellectuals"—i.e., literary critics, poets, novelists, essayists, etc.—tend to be, in their discussions of public affairs, shrill and irrelevant. The reason, I suggested, is that they insist on competing with the professionals and experts on the latter's own grounds. That is to say, they tend to hold and express firm opinions on specific social problems they know nothing about, while neglecting to discuss the basic moral problems and dilemmas that I should have thought it is their peculiar competence to discover, dramatise, and force upon our attention.

I suppose one might say that I was trying to put the literary intellectual "in his place." But it is an honourable place; in some ways the most honourable place. Why, then, should this little enterprise of mine have such a depressing effect on R.—especially when he is exactly the kind of literary intellectual who is guiltless of the conduct I censure?

IRVING KRISTOL

New York City

I AM SORRY that Mr. Kristol thinks I have misunderstood him. On the other hand, his letter makes me feel worse and not better. I feel even more that I am being put in my place, where I may meditate on the abstractions Mr. Kristol urges on my attention, leaving it to others to influence the decisions which affect my own life and the lives of everyone around me. If I do otherwise, it seems, I commit the impertinence of thinking I can actually compete with "the experts" on their own ground. What effrontery!

The trouble is that Mr. Kristol has been deceived by a false dichotomy. The kind of "basic moral problems" which he regards as the professional concern of the literary intellectual are in fact involved in every decision taken by the experts, and it is because they so frequently ignore this that the results are so appalling. But, equally, it is only by concerning himself with precisely the same fields of activity as the experts—economics, the Pentagon, education, city planning (though not, apparently, agriculture)—that the literary intellectual can discover why, in practice, the "basic moral problems" are so difficult to solve, or indeed why they are moral problems at all.

Does Mr. Kristol seriously believe that I should leave it to scientists and social scientists to run the Pentagon for me, while they should leave it to me to solve their basic moral problems for them? I almost think things might go better if the position were reversed.

R.

London

N.Y. Times

IN his article on the press Henry Fairlie said he would have liked to have had access to the messages between the *New York Times'* Foreign Editor and its foreign correspondents.

One would have thought that Mr. Fairlie might have taken the simple step, during his many months in the United States, of coming to the *New York Times* and asking to see the messages and correspondence. I would have been delighted to make them available to him.

SYDNEY GRUSON

Foreign Editor

New York Times,
Times Square,
New York City

Sunday Times

IT IS A PITY Mr. Henry Fairlie chose false English examples to illustrate his tenable theories about the differences between British and American newspapers, (ENCOUNTER, June). To suggest that the *Sunday Times* is starving us of words, for the sake of design, is really rather comic. To give a few recent examples:

Sir Solly Zuckerman on "Nuclear Defence" (February 13th and 20th, 1966) 16,000 words (in two issues).

Henry Brandon on "Sterling" (March 6th and 13th, 1966) 25,000 words (in two issues).

"Election 1966": In one issue during the Election, investigations and reporting totalled 12,000 words.

The *Sunday Times Magazine* devoted 10,000 words to Professor Leslie Hotson's book on Shakespeare, 6,000 words to David Holden on India. How many words does Mr. Fairlie want?

Mr. Fairlie is right to give credit to the *Birmingham Post*, but again it does not fit the facts to suggest it is the only large provincial newspaper doing inquisitive local political reporting. Has he so soon forgotten the *Sheffield Telegraph* and the rhino whip case? Has he never read the delvings of the *Northern Echo* into the political skulduggeries of County Durham?

Mr. Fairlie, in another characteristic venture into fiction, talks about the "Insight" type of reporting which does not, he says, discover stories but pins a feature on some government report. Perhaps he will say which government prompted the *Sunday Times* "Insight" piece on the antique dealers' ring; or on the affair of the cooker that wouldn't cook; or on The London Rubber Co.; or the piece on the ramifications of the Grade empire?

Mr. Fairlie's passion for words is clear and understandable. If only he could get them into some relation with the real world, it would be wholly admirable.

HAROLD EVANS

The Sunday Times,
Thomson House, London

The Innocent Libel

WITH HIS long experience as a journalist and his distinguished service as Chairman of the Press Council, Sir Linton speaks with an authority entitled to the greatest respect. He rightly points out, in his courteous comment [ENCOUNTER, July] on my recent ENCOUNTER article [March] on the Law and the Press, that the suggested defence of qualified privilege for the publication of a libel which, in the opinion of the Court, the newspaper had reasonable grounds for believing to be true and which concerned a matter of public interest would provide protection for the innocent libeller but none (beyond a retraction and apology) for the innocent person libelled.

This is indeed the dilemma. It already exists in all cases where the defence of absolute privilege or of qualified privilege exists and in these the policy of Parliament and of the law has been to consider the occasional injury to an individual to be outweighed by the public advantage secured by the right to speak frankly when the public interest so requires. If the law were altered so as to extend the defence to newspapers, it would still be for the Court—not the newspaper—to decide whether the matter published was, if true, one which it was in the public interest should be known. In that event, *salus populi suprema lex*. And if the principle were accepted that damages should be limited to actual loss sustained because of the libel, I think there would be few if any cases where the existence of the proposed new defence would in fact cause much unrequited damage.

But the recent debate in the House of Lords (in which owing to absence abroad I was unable to take part) has made it clear that that body at least is not yet prepared for so considerable a change in the law. Our Parliamentarians, while claiming for themselves an absolute privilege to make in Parliament statements about private citizens which are untrue, damaging and may even be (as has happened) malicious and unconcerned with the public interest, are unwilling to allow the much more limited protection to be accorded to the press. This conclusion is, I believe, a mistaken one but it cannot be ignored.

In the meantime, I hope that the other modifications in the law, particularly as to the functions of the judge and the jury, the right of the Court of Appeal to substitute reasonable damages, and the limitation of official secrets to matters really affecting the security of the State, may be secured through a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons, perhaps on the initiative of Mr. Harold Lever who rendered such conspicuous public service by the amendments in the law made by his earlier Bill.

SHAWCROSS

House of Lords

Abandoning Humanism?

PROFESSOR A. J. AYER in his article on "Humanism and Reform" in your June issue, puts a persuasive argument for the abolition of the Humanist Movement, though I doubt if this was his intention.

Life & Letters Today

Johannesburg

SENATOR Robert Kennedy quietly retaliated today to the gift of the book *Principles of Apartheid* "to help him understand South Africa better."

When meeting newspaper editors in Pretoria he handed over The American Negro Reference Book to be passed on to Dr. G. D. Scholtz, editor of the *Afrikaans Press*, who gave him the apartheid book.

DAILY MAIL

Santo Domingo

PRESIDENT-ELECT Balaguer, who ran an expensive American-style campaign that included a marching song to the tune of "Stars and Stripes Forever," had a light plane up over Santo Domingo for several weeks, dropping leaflets over the city.

The shower of leaflets from the air and from passing vehicles proved a boon to the poorer sections of the city, where there is a shortage of paper. Ragged, barefoot children raced about the muddy streets trying to catch them before they landed.

NEW YORK TIMES

Paris

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE has never lacked brilliant and devoted defenders, but history was made by the decree signed by President de Gaulle in last week's *Journal Officiel* announcing the creation of a High Commission for the Defence and Protection of the French Language to be presided over by the Prime Minister, M. Pompidou. For a comparable event one would have to go back as far as 1635, when Cardinal Richelieu founded the *Académie Française* and told it to get to work on a definitive dictionary.

The Pompidou commission won't even try to define words but will co-ordinate the activities of the numerous existing private bodies. One of these bodies is the "Fédération du Français Universel," which groups thirteen separate organisations, some of which are in Belgium, Switzerland, and Canada. The study group for French technical terms, for example, sits in the headquarters of the nationalised gas industry in Paris and is subsidised by it. It tries to find passable translations for words like "dispatch" and "know-how." By some curious twist which may be connected with the NATO crisis several people were obsessed by the word pipeline. A Frenchman would call it "peepleen," which has the effect of baring his teeth in a Draculan grin. Hence the joy which greeted the brilliant French-Canadian inspiration of oléoduc which has a fine aristocratic ring.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Dakar

HE MASTICATES American chlorophyll chewing gum, wears tailor-made European pin-striped suits, and his opinions on everything from politics to women are seemingly limitless. In short, Russia's Yevgeni Yevtushenko—part poet, part showman—is his old self again.

In the cold war battle for prestige here at the

first world festival of the Negro arts, Duke Ellington's performances clearly established the United States as the festival favourite. As their answer, the Russians turned not to their ballet dancers or their symphonies, but to Yevtushenko. Moscow is not likely to be disappointed. Hours after the box office opened for his recital at a huge theatre in Dakar next week the house was sold out.

On the recent trial and imprisonment of the two Soviet writers, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, Yevtushenko said: "I agree with what was done with them, but not with how it was done. I agree that they should have been punished. Should they be allowed to wash their dirty linen outside their own country? Still, I think they should have been brought not to a court, but before their literary peers. And I said so."

THE TIMES

Salisbury

RHODESIA'S editors, still defiant, run white spaces in their papers to show where material has been censored. One editor tried to accentuate this by printing the word "censored" in each white space, but the censors forbade it. The word "censored" was censored. And now the censors have issued an order prohibiting the white spaces.

DAILY MAIL

London

DR. GRZIMEK'S new book is chiefly concerned with wild life in the U.S.S.R., where he spent several months inspecting and filming Reserves. More is being done there, he discovered, than anywhere else to save animals from extinction. Can we hope that soon authors also will become a protected species?

SUNDAY TIMES

London

IT IS NOT every modern architect that would pit himself against Nash. Jane Drew, who has taken on the somewhat forbidding task of converting part of Carlton House Terrace into a new art centre, is not only that rare specimen—a distinguished woman architect; she is that even rarer thing, half of a famous husband and wife team.

Fry Drew and Partners functions from a large, elegant house in Gloucester Place which serves as offices and, on the top two floors, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell Fry. Surrounded by a magpie collection of carvings, bronzes and pottery from India, Africa and Persia, gleanings of an exotic career, and a polyglot assortment of modern paintings, Jane Drew calmly operates as wife, architect, mother, hostess and one-woman pressure group for adopted causes.

How does she herself relax? Very few formal holidays, but if she had to choose purely for pleasure it would be South Persia, perhaps parts of Italy or Greece. Reading? Late at night or on trains; ENCOUNTER from cover to cover each month, "Cider With Rosie," time after time.

THE TIMES

For if it is true that its basic aims "no longer seem important" and that the "major issues now lie in a different terrain" then surely the time has come to write "Mission More-or-Less Accomplished" on the banners and shut up the store.

The members thus released could then pursue the reforming activities for which Ayer argues, either in the political party of their choice or in one or other of the various bodies which exist to promote specific causes. To attempt to transform the Humanist Movement into a kind of "third force" which would spearhead broad social reforms is unnecessary if not impossible. It would merely duplicate and complicate the work of these other organisations and by attempting to do too much it would end by achieving nothing.

But is it really true that humanism has largely achieved its objects, and that it should therefore change its character and widen its aims? I would agree with Professor Ayer that there is little point in waging a negative and destructive war against the churches. They have shifted their ground (under pressure) and we have to shift ours, which is not the same thing as abandoning the field entirely. And that I fear is what Professor Ayer is suggesting.

HE ARGUES, for instance, that any attempt to change the law on religious instruction in maintained schools would "raise a political storm" out of all proportion to the value of the exercise. This is to lie down before you are kicked, to sacrifice principle for nothing, not even expediency! And I believe that he underestimates the broad degree of support which could be gathered for some reform of the law, even among non-humanists.

Later he suggests that it is hypocritical of humanists to propound their views to those in material want. If he means that it would be stupid to export thousands of copies of *The Humanist* or *The Freethinker* to a famine area, then he is right. But is it no longer true that religious superstition helps to consolidate poverty, or that some sections of the churches actively oppose any movement for social reform among the masses? He should study the role of the Church in Malta or Southern Italy. It is more urgent than ever that, side by side with positive efforts to raise the standard of living of people in under-developed areas, the work of opening minds to the "absurdities" of religious superstition should continue.

In short, there are a dozen basic issues on which the Humanist Movement still has much to do. I became a humanist because I believed in its aims, not because I was attracted by its policy on Viet Nam or Rhodesia or Public Schools or Immigration. There are other organisations which can cater more effectively for any strong feelings which Professor Ayer or I may have on these questions. We need to specialise and concentrate, to be specific and precise. We have a particular job to do and we ought to do it: paradoxically this will win wider support than Professor Ayer's broad, general and soft-peddling policy ever could.

TED WILLIS

House of Lords

IN HIS ZEAL to defend humanist orthodoxy, Lord Willis has read implications into my article which it did not contain. I did not propose that the Humanist movement should entirely give up its fight against religious superstition, but only gave reasons why it seemed to me that this was ceasing to be its sole or even its primary objective. Lord Willis says nothing to show that these reasons are not valid.

I did not say that any attempt to abolish the legal requirement that religious instruction be given in all maintained schools would raise a political storm "out of all proportion to the value of the exercise." I said that I feared that it would raise a political storm "out of all proportion to the part that religion does actually play in people's lives." This statement occurred in a paragraph in which I was conceding that the religious battle had not been entirely won by the humanists, and it was intended to suggest one of the main obstacles that we still have to surmount: the official pretence that religious belief is more widespread among us than it really is. I was in no way implying that this is a state of affairs in which we ought to acquiesce.

I did not say that for humanists to propose their doctrine to those in material want was hypocritical in itself. I said that it would be insensitive of them, if not hypocritical, "unless they believe that the values which they set on human experience and achievement were capable of being realised not merely by a privileged minority but by mankind in general." Does Lord Willis really wish to dispute this?

Finally, I cannot agree with Lord Willis that it is either unnecessary or impossible for the Humanist movement to act as a spearhead in the field of social reform. It is true that there are other organisations which concern themselves with social measures, but in no case that is known to me do they find their task so easy that they would not welcome Humanist support. It is noteworthy that in the Universities, where the Humanist movement has made its most striking progress in recent years, it has owed its success very largely to the broadening of its outlook which my article described. The religious issue is not soft-peddled for being seen in a wider context. On the contrary, it is the kind of restrictive policy which Lord Willis advocates that would be more likely than anything to deprive the movement of the vitality and influence which it now possesses.

A. J. AYER

London

Electing a Poet

I HAVE ONLY just seen your April number. I do not normally answer criticism which appears about me in the press, but I should be grateful if you would allow me the hospitality of your columns to protest against Mr. John Wain's insulting remarks about me in his article, "Electing a Poet." His letter seems to me to be characterised by the same spirit which inspired so many of those who supported Mr. Lowell, that is to say the habit of making spiteful

remarks about the opposing candidate and his supporters.

It is a little disingenuous of Mr. Wain to try to claim to have no connection with Oxford University, considering he is an Oxford graduate, who took his M.A., who speaks at Oxford University societies, and who was a nominator of one of the candidates for an Oxford University Professorship.

I have not spoken to Mr. Wain since 7 December and so anything he claims to know about my opinions he has taken from the daily press. I myself would not claim that I knew the opinions of Mr. Lowell's supporters from such evidence; as, for instance, from a vulgar alleged interview with one of his most distinguished nominators, which appeared in a daily paper. Mr. Wain, as a trained scholar, should know what reliance to place on such evidence.

It is true that I did say to Mr. Wain that I thought that Mr. Lowell would be an excellent candidate—I have not changed my mind—but there can be several excellent candidates. I never said that "he should have the Chair"—whatever that may mean. I admire him very much as a poet; I neither like nor approve of his translations from the authors whom I know; and I know nothing about him as a lecturer. But, if he had been elected, I would have welcomed him as an excellent choice.

It is a completely mendacious statement to say, as Mr. Wain has done of me:

"And for what motives does this master-mind operate?... Her motive for running Blunden was that somebody else was already running Lowell, so unless she found another candidate there wasn't any fun and excitement to be had."

Those were my motives, according to Mr. Wain, but what would have been more interesting to produce, would have been my methods. It is however easier to be abusive than constructive.

In December, when I spoke to Mr. Wain, I had not yet made up my mind whom I would support—at that time I had hoped to find a French poet who could lecture in English. I had some doubts of Mr. Lowell—not as a poet, but poets are not necessarily good lecturers. Mr. Wain is quite wrong when he says: "It was the election of Matthew Arnold that changed the tradition; from then on, it was hardly possible to ignore the fact that a really distinguished poet from outside the University could contribute a great deal by accepting the Chair." It was very successfully ignored until 1951, when, for the first time, it was considered suitable—or even desirable—to elect a poet as professor.

AT THE END OF DECEMBER I was asked by several people to nominate Mr. Blunden. I refused, at first, as I had been ill and had intended to have nothing to do with the election this time. I was begged again to nominate him and to collect other nominations. It was pointed out to me that, when he had been nominated in 1951—and had a very good chance of being elected—he had stood down so as not to split the vote of those who favoured a poet, and thus ensured the election of Mr. Day Lewis. It seemed right that, at the eleventh hour, he should

be given back the chance which he had sacrificed in 1951.

I finally agreed to nominate him and my motives were not those attributed to me by Mr. Wain.

I considered that he would be an excellent candidate. He is a distinguished poet, a good scholar and also a good lecturer. I also thought it fair that he should have a chance of election when, for the sake of poetry, he had given up a very good chance fifteen years before.

I asked various people whether they would nominate him and the response was encouraging, although the majority said that he had not the faintest chance of being elected, but I thought that a sufficient number would vote for him so that he would not be humiliated. So I proceeded to get nominations. Those who were prepared to support him were a cross section of those qualified to vote and they were not only among the elderly. I should not call Christine Brooke-Rose and Francis Warner elderly; nor would I call Mr. Lowell's supporters, Sir Maurice Bowra and Professor Nevill Coghill, young. As a matter of fact the percentage of professors and heads of houses amongst Mr. Lowell's nominators was higher than amongst Mr. Blunden's.

I must say that I fail to see what crime Mr. Wain accuses me of in my campaign for Mr. Blunden. I was not well enough to do the house-to-house canvassing I had done for Mr. Auden, and all I could do was write letters. Does Mr. Wain really believe that any letter of mine would have persuaded people to vote as they did not wish to vote? He quotes someone as saying that he had voted for Mr. Blunden on my insistence. What does that mean, and how could I insist on anyone voting in any way? Mr. Wain is a professional writer and why did he not do the same for his candidate; he ought to have been able to be persuasive?

I DID NOT adopt a frivolous attitude to the election, and did not say, or believe, that it did not matter who was elected—I was misunderstood and misrepresented by the press. When I said that the election was not of importance, I meant that the professor had no power; did not belong to any Faculty Board; did not choose the syllabus; did not examine for any undergraduate degrees; did not supervise research or examine theses; I meant that one could back one's fancy and choose anyone, however unconventional or erratic, without having to worry whether one might not be damaging the undergraduates or graduates in their training, examinations, or future. The Professor of Poetry has no responsibilities.

Mr. Wain, to prove the ignorance of Mr. Blunden's supporters, quotes a mythical burly man who said that he was voting for Mr. Blunden because he belonged to his cricket club. Well! one of Mr. Lowell's most distinguished *nominators*—not a mythical burly man seen in a M.A. gown—*wrote* to me that one of his reasons for supporting Mr. Lowell was that "politically and morally" he was superior to Mr. Blunden. Another said to me that he was voting for him as he was sound on Viet Nam. These do not seem to me any better grounds for supporting a candidate.

Mr. Lowell started off with all the odds in his

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favour. One good reason, I believe, for his losing the election was the disservice his supporters did him by their spite against his rival. What the French call "*le fair-play anglais*" could not stomach the disparaging remarks they made about Mr. Blunden. I have never met this kind of bitterness before in any election to the Professorship of Poetry, but I did not hear any of Mr. Blunden's supporters making any spiteful remarks against Mr. Lowell.

Mr. Wain ends his letter by asking rhetorically "For whom do universities exist?" I would answer that they exist for a great variety of people, including but not exclusively, those in *Statu Pupillari*.

ENID STARKIE

Oxford

SINCE December 7, I have had several meetings with Dr. Starkie. We talked together at least a couple of times in the Horse and Jockey, Banbury Road, Oxford; and we were photographed by some national newspaper as we stood talking outside the Sheldonian Theatre on the morning of the election. Whether the photograph was ever printed, I don't know.

JOHN WAIN

Oxford

AUTHORS

Nadine Gordimer, whose story "The Late Bourgeois World" appeared in the *JUNE ENCOUNTER*, has just published a novel of the same name (Gollancz), and it has been promptly banned in her native South Africa. . . .

Cesare Pavese's "Summer Storm" comes from a book of his short stories which Peter Owen will publish shortly. It was translated by A. E. Murch. A long critical study of Pavese by Stuart Hood was published in the *MAY ENCOUNTER*. . . .

George Steiner's article forms part of the introduction to the forthcoming *Penguin Book of Modern Verse Translation*. He is a fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, and will be teaching this year at Harvard and New York University. . . .

Olivia Manning is the author of the Balkan trilogy: *The Spoilt City* (1952), *The Great Fortune* (1959) and *Friends and Heroes* (1965), all published by Heinemann. Her story "Innocent Pleasures," published in last month's *ENCOUNTER*, will be included in *Winter's Tales 1966* (Macmillan). . . .

The second part of **Anthony Hartley's** African reportage will be published next month. . . .

The publishers of **Steven Marcus's** book on *The Other Victorians* are Basic Books (New York) and Weidenfeld & Nicolson (London). . . .

Cover design by **Colin Banks** and **John Miles**.

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